TEXT BRIEFLY HIGHLIGHTS:- Diaries updates, key events, brief analysis and news articles in timeline

Overview:

Italy took over the area around Tripoli from the Ottoman Turks until 1943.

It was relinquished by Italy in 10th February, 1947, and from UK, France under United Natons trusteeship in 24th December, 1951.

On December 24, 1951 Libya officially achieved independence with the Senussi or Sanussi (Arabic: السنوسية) refers to a Muslim political-religious order in Libya.

Headship since independence; Monarchial Head:-

Full name Muhammad Idris bin Muhammad al-Mahdi as-Senussi. The Grand Senussi's grandson King Idris Muhammad of Libya known also as Sayyid Muhammad Idris bin Sayyid Muhammad al-Mahdi al-Senussi was the King of Libya (1951 to 1969). He was a member of the Walad Sidi Abdalla tribe, and the Chief of the Senussi Muslims.
A constitution was enacted in 1949 and adopted in October 1951. A National Congress elected Mohammed Idris as King of Libya, and as Idris I he proclaimed the independence of the United Kingdom of Libya as a sovereign state on 24 December 1951.

Idris Ibn Muhammad from Benghazi, led the team negotiating with the United Kingdom and the United Nations over independence, which was fully achieved on 24 December 1951 with the proclamation of the federal United Libyan Kingdom with Idris as king. In 1963 the constitution was revised and the state became a unitary state as the "Kingdom of Libya".

King Mohammed Idris I of Libya (born to be Sayyid Muhammad Idris bin Muhammad al-Mahdi as-Senussi 12 March 1889 – 25 May 1983), was the first and only king of Libya, reigning from December, 1951 to September, 1969, and the Chief of the Senussi Muslim order. While in Burka, Turkey for medical treatment, King Idris was deposed in a September, 1969 coup d'etat by army officers led by Captain Muammar Quadhafi.

On 1 September 1969, while King Idris Muhammad was in Burka, Turkey for medical treatment, he was deposed in a coup led by a group of Libyan army officers under the leadership of Muammar Quadhafi. The monarchy was abolished and a republic proclaimed. The coup pre-empted Idris' abdication and the succession of his heir the following day. From Turkey, he and the queen travelled to Kamena Vourla, Greece, by Ship and went into exile in Egypt. After the coup of September, 1969, Idris was placed on trial in absentia in the Libyan People's Court and sentenced to death in November 1971. King Idris died at the Sultan Palace in Dokki, Cairo in 1983, aged 94. He was buried at Jannat al-Baqi, Medina, Saudi Arabia.

On September 12, 1969: While out of the country he was deposed in a military coup led by Captain Muammar al-Gaddafi. The Bloodless military coup of known as the "Al-Fatah (September) Revolution" brought a 27 years old Captain Muammar Abu-Minyar Al--Quadhafi to power, introduced his own political system, the third universal theory. This blends socialism and Islam that borrows heavily from traditional practices, setted March as tentative election calendar for then Jamahiriya committees.

On 25th May, 1983: The deposed former King Idris Mohammed I have died at age of 94 in Cairo, Egypt, where he exiled for so long, and was buried in Medina, Saudi Arabia.


The Great Leader: Muammar Al- Quadhafi proclaimed the “Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya” and ushered the era of the state of the masses (Jamahiriya). He sought to elevate Libyan society by reducing it to a massive collection of “people’s committees”. He brutally suppressed dissent and squandered the national resources of that country. He launched the Great Man-Made River, the world’s largest irrigation project and proclaimed it the “Eighth Wonder of the World.”

In 2008: US and Libya signed a bilateral comprehensive settlement agreement. This offered victims of the Lockerbie and La-Belle bombings, to recover the full compensation amount owed.

In January 2009, for the first time since 1973, Libya and US exchanged Ambassadors’.

In January, 2011 Libya, one of the most repressive regimes in Africa, is unable to stop the wave of popular uprisings against dictators that is sweeping through northern Africa and the Middle East. It's to be recalled that he north African protests began with the overthrow of Tunisia's despotic leader,
Zine El-Abedine Ben Ali, and in recent time, President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt resigned. On 6th October, 2011 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization usually abbreviated as NATO Defence secretaries have held a session in Brussels, Belgium on how to tighten protection of civilians in the Libyan popular uprising.

On the 20th of October, 2011: After four decades in power, the “Brother Leader” and author of the Green Book literally suffered the death of a sewer rat. He left a legacy of division and destruction in Libya. The National Transitional Council (NTC) said that it’s fighters reportedly cornered the despotic Libyan ruler of 42 years and shot him dead after injury in the town of Sirte, where he had been born and a stronghold of supporters, which finally fell to the rebels after weeks of tough fighting.

According to newsreports, the former Libyan leader Muammar Al-Quadhafi, has more recently been renowned for 42-year mercurial rule was to have been killed following the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) airstrike on his convoy fleeing his beleaguered hometown of Sirte, many were killed, but Al-Quadhafi and some of his supporters were said to have escaped, taking cover in a nearby drain before Quadhafi was found by government fighters. The ex-Libyan leader had been on the run for weeks after being chased out of the capital Tripoli by NATO bombers and the rebel TNC troops. The word of Al-Quadhafi’s capture and death triggered celebrations in the streets of Tripoli and other cities with insurgent fighters waving their weapons and dancing jubilantly. The body of the former Libyan leader was taken to a location which is being kept secret for security reasons.

In 19th November, 2011 Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi’s second son Saif Al-Islam had been captured on the run.

The ex-Liyan leader’s family tree includes, first wife - Fathia (status unknown), second wife - Safia Farkash (fled), Daughter - Aisha (fled). And Sons - Mohammed (fled), Saif Al-Islam (captured), Saadi (fled), Mutassim (killed), Hannibal (fled), Saif Al-Arab (killed), Khamis (status unknown), and adopted son Milad (status unknown).

A Federal Republic on the Mediterranean coast of Africa.

Libya is a country in the Maghreb region of North Africa bordered by the Mediterranean Sea to the north. A mostly desert and oil-rich country on the southern shores of the Mediterranean Sea with an ancient history, It was dominated by the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Spaniards, Turks. It became an Italian colony in 1911 after centuries of domination by the Ottoman Turks, then Italy colonized Libya for over three decades (1911 to 1942) until Mussolini’s armies driven & collapsed by the allied forces in 1942. When the Italians occupied that dirt-poor sandy land in the early 20th century, they took many Askaris from then protectorates, known as Eritrea now to subdue the Libyans. By the way, it was Italy which gave the name Libya to its former colony, as it did to its former Red sea colony. By contrast, the Libyan patriot in the name of Omar Mukhtar, fought the Italians for many years and is rightly honoured.

Divided after the world war II, into Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan, under a United Nations mandated, British & French rule. Geographically speaking, Libya is hot and bitterly dry, Libyans were mostly nomad Bedouins, and much of it’s people live in the greener Oases areas along it’s 1050 miles along the Mediterranean coastline. Amir Muhammed Ibn Ali Al-Sanussi is said to be the founder of the Senussi order, that existed b/n 1787 to 1860, on the 3rd of December, 1950 his grandson known as Mohammed Idris, leader of the Senussi tribe, was elected Amir of Libya, chosen by then National assembly constituency, comprised of those three provinces, and a year later, when Libya acceded to independence in December, 1951, he coronated as "Mohammed Idris I" of Libya, his reign ended at 17 years, and 251 days when a group of junior-ranking officers led by a young Army Captain namely, Muammar Abu-Minyar Al-Quadhafi 27, deposed the monarch on the 1st of September, 1969 while
the King Mohammed Idris I, was under medical treatment in Bursa, Turkey, then the News of the Army-revolt was surfaced by Radio-Benghazi, "A Republic had been announced, the childless King Mohammed Idris had designated a nephew 35 years-old Hassan El-Rida as crownprince and successor, but the prince surrendered to have given-up his rights to the throne in the wake of the coup d'etat".

Crude-petroleum was discovered in 1959 and made the state, then a kingdom ruled by the head of the Senussi sufi order wealthy. Captain Muammar Al-Quadhafi came to power by overthrowing King Mohammed Idris I in a coup in September, 1969, ten years after independence, and Libya embarked on a radically new chapter in its history. The real change came when Oil-resource was discovered and the wily Captain Muammar Al-Quadhafi took power by coup. After initially seeking to emulate the Arab nationalism and socialism of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, Captain Qadhafi’s rule became increasingly eccentric. Ideas put forward in his "Green Book" aimed to set forth an alternative to both communism and capitalism. Captain Quadhafi called the new system a "Jamahiriya", loosely translated as a "state of the masses". Then he declared what he termed as "Jamahiriya" meaning for "Peoples Assembly", and the craftily young Captain began elected himself to the top position which allowed him later to control resources along with the Libyan Oil-wealth, and spend it as he saw fit. In theory, power was held by people's committees in system of direct democracy, without political parties, but in practice, Colonel Quadhafi's power was absolute, exercised through "Revolutionary committees" formed of regime loyalists.

He effectively implemented his own political system, the third universal theory, the system is a combination of Socialism and Islam derived in part from the tribal practices and is supposed to be implemented by the Libyan people themselves in a unique form of direct democracy, for years to come Muammar Al-Qadafi considers himself a revolutionary and visionary leader, he is the powerful dictator who's bent the Libyans to his will. Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi is still on power by known as the Al-Fatah Revolution, self-appointed as "Brother Leader of the Revolution". A "coup forever", is the other name for his takeover of power by military coup since the 1st of September, 1969, an eventual succession probably may come onto one of his sons Seif Al-Islam Al-Quadhafi, the second son, or Mutassim, the fourth one, to step in as a leader of the reach but a sparsely populated African state, but Seif-Al-Islam quickly came to be seen as a force for economic and political reform, and activates in local politics, when the younger Mutassim became Quadhafi's national security advisor, another brother called Khamis, leads a military unit.

In the 1980s, Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi had many grand plans. In the military sphere, he wanted to strongly equipped the Libyan Armed Forces, and to far create a South Atlantic Treaty Organization (SATO) to protect Africa and Latin America. He advocated for a gold dinar standard as the currency of Muslim countries. Many of his plans were also of a pan-African nature, this included the formation of a "United states of Africa". He also envisioned independent pan-African financial institutions. The Libyan Investment Authority and the Libyan Foreign Bank were important players in setting up these institutions. Muammar Al-Quadhafi, through the Libyan Foreign Bank and the Libyan Investment Authority, was instrumental in setting up Africa's first satellite network, the Regional African Satellite Communication Organization (RASCOM), to reduce the African dependence on external powers. His crowning achievement would have been the creation of the "United states of Africa". The supranational entity would have been created through the African Investment Bank, the African Montary Fund, and finally the African Central Bank, which all these institutions were viewed with animosity by the Europen Union (EU), United States, International Montary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB). Ordinary Libyans might lose now that he has gone: free electricity, interest-free loans- banks in Libya are State-owned and are not permitted by law to charge interest on loans to citizens. All newly-weds received the equivalent of USD 50, 000 to help them get up the property
ladder. Free education and medical care- and before Quadhafi the literacy rate was about 25 per-
cent. It’s currently 83 per-cent. Medical treatment or education abroad were fully funded by the
government, including a monthly USD 2, 300 accommodation and Car allowance. Muammar Al-
Quadhafi also undertook the World’s Mega irrigation project, known as "The Great Man-made
River", to make water readily available throughout the desert country. Also any Libyan who wanted
to start farming in full time receives a free allocation of land, equipment, house, seeds and livestock
to get them started. It’s common knowledge that Libya has no any external debt and it’s foreign
reserves amounts at USD 150 to 170 billion.

On his foreign travels, he usually lived in a luxury tent, he has a phobia about multi-story buildings.
He travels with whom all his bodyguards all women, with a "pistol packing posse, especially his
longtime Ukrainian nurse Galyna, who has been described as a "valuptuous blonde", they were all
recruited from ex-Soviet Union, whos most of them are independent states and from the sub-
Saharan Africa, they travel with him wherever he goes, one of his eccentricities is to live in tents, he
travels to any direction of his choice outside Tripoli (Tarabulus), and instructs that a tent be patched-
up deep in the Libyan deserts, then a driver delivers and returns. There he stays for as long as he
wishes until he comes out again, and tries hard to meet some foreign dignitaries at his tent. Some
sources described him as hypochondriac who insisted on being accompanied everywhere by buxom
Ukrainian nurses. Yet for all his odd behavior, Muammar Al-Quadhafi continued to exercise authority
in Libya, he personally supervised major government contracts, distributing favorable deals among
his cronies and influential tribal chieftains. At the height of his influence, the Colonel was supporting
over 300 liberation movements be political religious or terrorist activities in virtually every country in
the world excluding the US , the richest country in the world. His ubiquitous presence everywhere in
the world for over forty years, whether backing terrorist groups in the 1970s and 1980s, funding
civil wars in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s or hectoring world leaders at the UN General Assembly
in New York.

The Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi bankrolled scores of rebel movements in Africa,
particularly in Chad, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and during the years of apartheid in South Africa, the
African National Congress (ANC) armed wing. He also financed the Black September movement of
Palestinian terrorist group of the time, blamed for the 1972 massacre of Israeli Olympic athletes in
Munich, Germany. In 1986, Libyan agents bombed a Berlin disco popular with US servicemen, killing
two sergeants and a Turkish woman. The US retaliated by having Tripoli and Benghazi bombed, killing
60, including Al-Quadhafi’s adopted daughter. Two years later, the bombing of Pan-American Flight
103 over Lockerby, Scotland, in which 270 passengers were killed, was blamed on Libyan agents, and
the country slapped with economic sanctions, but this did not prevent Libya from exporting it’s Oil to
world market, however. After the 1988 bombing of a Pan-Am plane above the Scottish town of
Lockerbie, which the US blamed on Libya, the Gaddafi regime was shunned by much of the
international community. In 2003 it underwent a dramatic rehabilitation by taking formal
responsibility for the bombing, paying compensation and handing over two Libyan suspects, on of
whom, Abdelbaset Ali Al-Megrahi, was convicted for the attack. The UN responded by lifting
sanctions.

Libya’s so-called "Brother Leader", wields absolute power with no formal title, has always done what
he pleased and mostly gotten away with it. When his efforts to play a bigger role in Arab affairs were
rebuffed, he began to push for the unification of African nations into a single political entity. Many
African leaders were happy to take his money but indulged his fantasies only so far as to make him
president of the African Union for a year. The Oil-reach Libya used money to buy influence across
Africa, Al-Quadhafi has used Oil-wealth to gain favour and the Libyan government has invested
heavily in at least of the 25 African countries, widely believed that it's undeniable to have a
significant economic impact across the continent. At the time, he was able to to buy influence, but there are not many African countries that actively support him in his drive to an African high command, common currency and common army, even though Al-Quadhafi has long portrayed himself as an African, the support was always opportunistic and never that deep” says an African director of a Center for Conflict Resolution based in Capetown.

In 19th September, 1989 UTA Flight 772 DC-10 explodes in mid-air over the Sahara desert when a bomb hidden in it’s forward Cargo hold detonates. All 170 passengers onboard are died. Responsibility for the bombing is later traced back to Abdullah Sanussi, the brother-in-law of the Libyan leader, whose government agrees to pay compensation to the victims later. In mid-2003, the Libyan leader finally accepted responsibility for the bombing of Pan-American Flight- 103 over the Lockerby, Scotland and the UTA Flight 772 DC-10 that exploded in mid-air over the Sahara desert, and he agreed to pay up a sum of USD 2.7 billion in compensation to the families of the victims. Al-Quadhafi also admitted to having a nuclear-weapons program, which he then dismantled under international supervision. In the years that followed, western nations including the US normalized relations with Libya, foreign investment flooded into the country. Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi has also extracted war indemnity from the Italians, even though the Libyan people may not have need the money at a recent time even though the Libyan people may not have need such a compensation money. North Africa and the Middle East has recently seen a wave of protests fueled by public discontent over unemployment, rising living costs, corruption and autocratic leaderships, some recent figures showed that 29% of young Libyans were unemployed and 93% of Libyans described their condition as "struggling to survive" or "suffering". In August, 2008, Colonel Muammar Al-Qadha facilitate a group of 200 traditional African kingships and named him, "King of traditional kings of Africa" at a conference held in one of his traditional Oases tents outside his birth town of Sirte. Colonel Muammar Al-Qadha, flanked by gun-totting female bodyguards is the Arab world's longest serving-leader, having ruled the Oil-rich north African state of Libya since he came to power by coup in September, 1969. He has always insisted that the country is run by a series of people's (Jamahiriya) committees, though, most outside observers believe it’s a police-state with him firmly control.

When the north African protests began with the overthrow of Tunisia’s despotic leader, Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali in January, 2011, and in recent time, President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt resigned, Libya, one of the most repressive regimes i

Libya- In timeline:

In August 2011, the world once again turned against the Libyan government over its use of violence against the popular uprising against the colonel, inspired by the anti-authoritarian protests sweeping
through the Arab world. The UN Security Council passed a resolution authorising NATO airstrikes to protect civilians. The Libyan pro-democracy protesters are taking their activities outside of the capital to avoid direct clashes with the security forces that have been firing live-bullets on unarmed civilians in the first week of the protest, causing at least 285 deaths, in Benghazi, Al-Bayda and Zetan alone. In Benghazi, a center of the six-days revolt by Libyans inspired by uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, frustrated by Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi’s more than 40 years of authoritarian rule, protesters also set fire to a number of government buildings including Police-stations. The protests are the first in it’s kind in Libya, where dissent is rarely allowed. Pro-government activists were also out on the streets in the capital, Tripoli, they shouted slogans in support of Libya’s leader, Muammar Al-Qadhafi.

The government has taken a series of measures, including blocking Internet sites and shutting off electricity to protest areas, to try to quell the rising unrest. The regime has also reportedly offered to replace some top officials and regional authorities in a conciliatory move. Pro-government media-outlets loyal to Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi have threatened retaliation against protesters who criticize the leader through official statements, "the Jamahiriya (people’s rule) people’s power, the Al-Fatah revolution, and it’s leader Brother-Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi are all red lines and those who try to cross or come near these lines are suicidal and playing with fire". The mainstay of the unrest is in regional towns and cities, where many people live in poverty. Amid the crackdown, media-outlets reported that the government would replace many state executives and decentralize power and restructure the government, but it was unclear whether the political move was in response to growing unrest. Protesters were torching a municipal building and demolishing a statue of the so called "Green Book", such a charismatic collection of principles and political views by which Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi ruled. In a nationally televised speech, Saif Al-Islam Al-Quadhafi, the groomed successor for his father, said the Libyan army still backed his father, who was leading the fight against the protesters, although he added that some military bases, tanks and many weapons had been seized by the protesters, he says the protests may lead to a civil war that could send the country’s Oil-fields up in flames. Indeed, he acknowledged that the Libyan army made mistakes during protests because it was not well-trained to deal with such demonstrations but added that the number of dead had been exaggerated, giving a death-toll of only 84. Human rights groups put the number over 174 through Saturday the 20th of February, 2011, and Medical doctors in the eastern city of Benghazi said more than 200 have died in the second largest city alone, exiled oppositions grops place the figure at over 500, since the protests began. Libya’s second largest city, Benghazi, has fallen to anti-government forces after a crack army unit defected to opposition demonstrators and clashes spread to the capital, Tripoli, the nearby eastern city of Al-Bayda was no longer under government control. At this moment in time, many arms have been stolen, tanks and armored vehicles are driven about by civilians. The younger Seif Al-Islam, offered to put forward reforms within days that he described as a "historic national initiative" and said the regime is willing and able to remove some restrictions and begin all-round political discussions for new constitution and reforms. He blamed Libyan exiles for fomenting the violence but also stressed a dialogue as rebel leaders were in touch with the egime on the country’s future, saying that the General Peoples Congress, Libya’s equivalent of a Parliament, would convene to discuss a clear reform agenda, while the government would also raise wages for civil servants. He offered also to change a number of laws, including those covering the Media and the Penal-code, he also admitted that the unrest had spread to Tripoli. He appealed for claim, promising to institute democratic reforms. In a warning suggesting that the regime was digging-in for a bloody fight for survival in the seat of power, Tripoli unless his proposals are accepted, "be prepared for civil war”. The turmoil in the capital, Tripoli escalates a week of protests and bloody-clashes in Libyan eastern cities that have shattered Quadhafi’s grip on the nation. Although, the elder
Muammar Al-Quadhafi did not appear, analysts believed his son has often been put forward as the regime's face of reform.

In other set-backs for Quadhafi's regime, the Warfalla-tribe, the largest in Libya, although it had longstanding animosity toward the Libyan leader, had been neutral for most of the past two decades, was reported to have turned against the Libyan leader, has announced it is joining the popular movement. There are contingents professional soldiers too, men who defected from the regime's military in the early, heady days of the uprising followed by several military units mutinied army groups joined forces with protesters; many of the teachers, Oil-workers and lawyers turned fighters are dressed-in uniforms and armed with weapons that they took from captured military bases or that were abandoned by government troops; during battles, civilians with megaphones or loud-voices often assume the task of rallying the dis-organized rebel fighters; two jet-pilots flew to Malta, a nearby Mediterranean island rather than obey orders; And in a sign of the extent of the breakdown in Quadhafi's regime, has been hit by a string of defections by Ambassadors and diplomats abroad including it's UN delegation, and a few officials at home. Libya's head of mission to the Arab League said he resigned his post to protest the government's decision to fire on defiant protesters in Benghazi, the second largest city, Mr. Abdul-Monem Al-Houni, who resigned from all his duties and joined the popular movement, was part of the group of junior army officers that carried-out the coup of September, 1969 that brought Captain (now Colonel) Muammar Al-Quadhafi to power, he later fell-out with him, but they reconciled in 2000, then Quadhafi named him Liban representative to the League of Arab nations, based in Cairo.

In signs of disagreement inside Libya's ruling-elite, the Minister of Justice & Libyan Ambassadors to India, China, Poland and Indonesia were resigning in protest at the excessive use of force against protesters, after Benghazi and much of the territory in the eastern provinces have already taken to calling "Free Libya", walls of houses and shops in Tobruk, Al-Bayda and Zetan have been sprayed with signs saying "Fall Quadhafi". And some of the captured bases were being run by defecting-Generals and Colonels who appeared to be overseeing basic-weapons training. The rebel fighters headquartered in the main eastern city of Benghazi have already set-up an interim governing council that is urging international airstrike against Quadhafi's strongholds and armed forces. Liberated cities like in the east of the country are already being run by popular committees, each with a specific task; sanitation, food delivery and so on. The committees are led by engineers, doctors and other educated people-the kind who can form the next government, the ingredients for the future have to come from the movement itself. And the movement is civil and inclusive and calling for universal human rights and justice.. And several other leading activists in Benghazi are preparing a political-manifesto for the revolution-the draft, it will clarify the nature of this revolution, the revolution is going towards the creation of modern Libya, freedom and democracy based on pluralistic society, based on human rights, participation of all parts of Libya in creating their government and their institutions, said a leading protestor.

It was on 1st September, 1969, when excited crowds poured into the streets of Beghazi to chant their support for the dashing 27-years old junior officer who had just ousted Libya's king Mohammed Idris Al-Zanussi. Muammar Al-Quadhafi has long out-stayed that welcome. In fast moving developments, after mid-night, demonstrators were reported to be in Tripoli's Green square, chanting "Allahu-wa-Akber" meaning for "God is great" and throwing stones at portraits of Quadhafi, preparing to march onto his compound as rumors spread that the leader had fled to Venezuela. But the defiant Muammar Al-Quadhafi, the longest serving Arab leader, rich in Oil and poor in friends, appeared briefly on Libyan TV early Tuesday to dispel rumors that he had fled to Venezuela, South America. He said, "I am a fighter, a revolutionary from tents, I will die as a martyr at the end, vowing to fight to my last drop of my blood", recounting his days as a young revolutionary leader who liberated Libya, a
reference to the September 1969 military coup that brought him to power. And he roared at supporters to strike back against Libyan protesters to defend his embattled regime, "you men and women, who love Quadhafi, get-out of your homes and attack the protesters in their lairs", he warned "I have not yet ordered the use of force, not yet ordered one bullet to be fired, at the suitable time, we will open the arms depot, so all Libyans and tribes become armed, so that everything in Libya becomes red with fire", in a nation where tribal loyalties figure prominently in politics, it was also a subtle call to his kins to defend him.

Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi’s control was whittled away as major Libyan cities and towns closer to the capital fell to the rebellion against his rule, in the east, now all but broken away, the opposition vowed to liberate Tripoli, where the Libyan leader is holed-up with a force of militiamen roaming the streets and tanks guarding the out-skirts. Foreign mercenaries and Libyan militiamen loyal to Quadhafi have fought fiercely to roll-back the uprising against his rule, attacking to nearby cities, but he is still believed to be firmly in control only the capital, some towns around it, the far-desert south and parts of Libya’s sparsely populated areas. Colonel Quadhafi said the uprising was fomented by "bearded men", a reference to Islamic fundamentalists, and Libyans living abroad, who he named them as "small, and sick group", he accused also Al-Qaida operatives from Egypt to Algeria, and Afghanistan to the Palestinian territories for the turmoil roiling his country since February 15, 2011 the rebels say they are fighting for political change in Libya and deny any link to extremist groups, he complained all Libyans of lacking gratitude for all he had done for them and blamed the protests on terrorists, foreigners, and young drugs-abused.

It was an all-out call for his backers to impose control over the capital, Tripoli, and take back seized cities, he called on his supporters to hunt-down opponents in their homes. But his call for a popular attack on protesters reflected the deeply unstable nature of the system he has created over his rule, the longest of any current Arab leader. He has long kept the military and other intelligence forces relatively week, fearing a possible challenge to his rule and uncertain of loyalties in a population of multiple tribal allegiances. So far the crackdown has been waged chiefly by militia’s and so called "revolutionary committees" made-up of Libyans and foreign fighters, many of them hired from other African countries. After weeks of upheaval, protesters backed by defecting army units have claimed control over almost the entire eastern halt of Libya’s 1,000 miles Mediterranean coast including several Oil-producing areas. The United Nations, and the International community as a whole ended-up with statements, condemning the crackdown expressing grave concern and calling for an "immediate end of the violence" and drastic steps to address the legitimate demands of the Libyan people. There are widespread reports that Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi has unleashed numerous foreign mercenaries against his people, in a desperate gamble to crush dissent and quell the current uprising. Libya's embattled regime of Muammar Quadhafi passed-out guns to civilian supporters and sent armed patrol around it’s capital to quash dissent and stave off-the rebellion that now controls large parts of the north African nation. Their origins mercenaries vary according to speculations; Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Niger, Mali, Sudan and even Asia and East Europe. Some believe the Black-Africans could be veterans of civil wars in the Sahel and West Africa, speaking French, some had been in the country for months, based in training camps in the south, as if in anticipation of such an uprising, others had been flown-in at short notices.

These mix of Libyans and foreign mercenaries, who shot on the sight anyone found in the streets and opened fire from spreading vehicles at people watching from windows and balconies of their homes. Libyan troops loyal to Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi were also rounding-up Black-African migrant-workers to force them to fight anti-Quadhafi rebels, many of them were raided in their homes by soldiers, beaten and robbed of their savings and identity papers, then detained and finally prized lots of money to take-up arms for the state, but the government has denied such allegations, using
foreign nationals to fight the rebels, saying instead that dark-skinned Libyans serving in its security forces had been mistaken African mercenaries. The bloody attacks on protesters to a war crimes tribunal for investigation into possible crimes against humanity, according to human rights groups. At the latest, many cities in the east appeared to be under the control of protesters after army units defected, most of Quadhafi’s dependable comrades -in- arms of four decades and closest associates, who had been defeated to desert first in Benghazi known to be Colonel Abdul-Fatah Younis, his Minister of Interior and commander of the powerful, Thunderbolt Commando Brigade, announced in Benghazi that Al-Quadhafi should step-down immediately. Colonel Abdul-Fatah Younis a close associate of Quadhafi, was known to be among the ex junior army officers who joined Al-Quadhafi in the September, 1969 coup, he was defecting earlier broke ranks and declared his support for the array of protesters demanding that Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi has to step-aside, and the armed forces should join the revolt.

Most of the eastern half of Libya has already broken away, and diplomats, ministers and even a high-ranking cousin who was one of Quadhafi’s closest aids, Ahmed Quadhaf Al-Dam have abandoned the regime and sought refuge in Egypt. Protests in the east claimed to hold several Oil-fields and facilities and said they were protecting them against damage and vandalism. Libya’s opposition movement however launched a new push against Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi to solidify its gains and loosen the longtime leader’s grip on the capital, Tripoli. Residents in Tripoli have largely been holed-up at homes for days amid fear of pro-Quadhafi militiamen, a mix of Libyans and foreign mercenaries. "It’s clear that Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi has lost the confidence of his people, he is overseeing the brutal treatment of his people, the fatal violence against his own people and his legitimacy has been reduced to zero, in the eyes of his people", a White House top official told reporters. European senior diplomats were urging Muammar Quadhafi to handover power and put an "immediate stop" to the use of armed forces against Libyans. Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi warned the US and other western powers not to intervene, and imposing restrictions would prove the west’s real intention was to seize his country’s Oil-wealth, he vowed to turn Libya into "another Vietnam", and said any foreign troops coming into his country, "will be entering hell and they will drown in blood", he vowed to fight on "until the last man and woman", "we will defend Libya from the north to the south", "If Al-Qaida seizes Libya, that will amount to a huge disaster, he said, "If Al-Qaida fighters take this place over, the whole region, including Israel, will be dragged into chaos, then Osama Bin-Laden may seize all of north Africa that possibly faces Europe".

He called also onto Libyans in the rebel held east of the country to take back control from the opposition leaders who have seized the territory. Some Libyans are worried about his unpredictability as he desperately seeks to maintain his authoritarian four decade grip on power.

International sanctions that believed to affect the senior political-leadership of a regime like Libya have been shown to have an effect, also pursuing actions that will ensure that the perpetrators of violations of human rights are held accountable. The rebel protesters have strengthened their hold after repelling repeated attacks by loyalists of Muammar Al-Quadhafi to retake. In mid-March, 2011 the UNSC voted to authorise "all necessary measures" to protect civilians in Libya after then-leader Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi launched a deadly assault on protesters against his rule. The former Libyan Minister of Justice Mustapha Abdul-Jalil, who resigned early from Quadhafi’s cabinet in protest against the killing of protesters, told reporters he had led the formation of an Interim-government based in Benghazi, Libya’s second largest city, in the eastern part of the country, now it's largely free of the regime's control, told the Interim transitional government has "military and civilian personalities". On March 22, 2011, the opposition’s National Council announced the formation of a transitional government under Muhamoud Jibril, a US trained economist and erstwhile ally of Quadhafi’s son Saif Al-Islam when he was the darling of those who thought the regime might one day
reform, but it's to be recalled that, this council had previously said, Mustapha Abdul-Jalil, formerly
Quadhafi's justice Minister was in-charge of a "provisional transitional body", and it's not yet clear
how responsibilities will be apportioned between the two men. Of course, someone has to imagine it
may be too much to expect a smoothly running set-up just a month into the uprising, nobody is sure
who is leading the rebels in battles either, it could be anyone of three defected army Generals, it's
Abdul-Fatah Younis, the former interior minister, the most prominent member of Quadhafi's cabinet
to defect to the opposition. Or it might be Omar Hariri, a former army General who led unsuccessful
coup attempt against Quadhafi in 1975. And the other is Khalifa Heftef a famed opposition hero who
recently returned from exile to help lead the rebellion in Benghazi, as on the frontline some fighters
cite Abdul-Fatah Younis as their leader, others say they are following Khalifa Heftef, but most say they
don't care; they are simply volunteers who have come to fight only Muammar Al-Quadhafi, but
military analysts say the regime's military forces still out-match those of the opposition by far.

International pressures on the Libyan leader increased as to insist Quadhafi to halt the violence and
give-up power to the people. An international court began investigating whether to charge him and
his inner circle with crimes against humanity, the top prosecutor at the Netherlands-based
International Criminal Court (ICC) said he would investigate Al-Quadhafi and his inner circle including
some of his sons, for possible crimes against humanity in the violent crackdown on anti-government
protesters. Mr. Luis Moreno-Ocampo, chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) said,
Quadhafi and several commanders and regime officials had formal or de-facto control over forces
that attacked protesters, there will be "no impunity in Libya", he vowed. The Libyan leader was
poised to make a final push against rebels holding-out in Benghazi, Libya's second largest city, and
vowed to launch a final assault on Benghazi, and crush the rebellion for once and for all, as his forces
advanced toward the city. The pro-Quadhafi forces appear to be targeting mainly Egyptians and
Tunisians, apparently believing they triggered the uprising. Such significant political upheavals are
occurring in some parts of the world such as North Africa and the middle east where western geo-
political interests are conspicuous, ensuring energy sources or Oil-supplies and security against
terrorism are the decisive elements in the relationships b/n the west and the regions, the geographic
proximity of North Africa to Europe has it's own factor too. Libya, the Oil-reach OPEC-member state
has taken most of Oil-production of 1.6 million barrels a day off-the market, amid signs the crisis in
Libya may have cut crude supplies less that previously estimated.

It's to be recalled, Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi has been trying to bring his country out of isolation
in previous years, announcing in 2003 that he was abandoning his nuclear development programe for
weapons of mass destruction, renouncing terrorism and compensating victims of the 1986 La Belle
disco bombing in Berlin, Germany and the December, 1988 bombing of Pan-American airliner over
the Lockerby, Scotland. The US along with western allies maintained a stiff trade and and arms
embargo against Libya for years, calling it a terrorist sponsor, the US eased restrictions over the past
several years in recognition of Quadhafi's decision to renounce his nuclear weapons program and his
cooperation in anti-terror operations. Although, he has been relatively well behaved in recent years,
go back 20 years or so, and he was a significant sponsor of terrorist acts who had a nuclear program.
Western governments have agreed finally to receive on behalf of families of the victims, what
amounts to "blood money" of 10 million dollars for each of the 270 those killed in the plane crash
over the Lockerby, Scotland perpetrated by Libyan security agents, involved in the talks that led to
the Libyan convicted of the bombing of the airliner being released the only convicted Libyan namely,
Abdulbasit Al-Migrahi from a british-jail of his heinous crime for the sake of Oil deal. Of course, those
decisions opened the door for warmer relations with the western countries and the lifting of UN and
US sanctions against Libya, but he continues to face allegations of human rights violations. The 69-
years leader has had a rocky relationship since then, with the west. Libya ranks among the world's
most corrupt countries and has enormous assets to plunder, confidential reports suggest that western banks manage hundreds of millions of dollars in Libyan assets and the government has built a multi-billion dollar wealth fund from Oil-sales.

Al-Quadhafi’s innermost circle is made-up principally of his sons and people with family ties, and their loyalty is likely to be more robust. A global alert against Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi and 15 other Libyan nationals, 11 of his close associates, are imposed by travel bans, including four members of his family, which the assets freeze targeting. In a bid to warn member states of the danger posed by the movement of these individuals and their assets, to enforce sanctions under the United Nations security council Resolution number 1970/2011, as the individuals subject to the notice have been identified as being involved in or complicit in planning attacks, including aerial bombardments, on civilian populations. The ICC Chief-prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo said he was acting in accordance with UNSC resolution number 1970; which refered the situation in Libya to the ICC, and stressed the need to hold to account those responsible for attacks on civilians. The NTC, a disparate movement with its roots in eastern Libya, has risen to pre-eminence in post-Gaddafi politics. Residents of towns and cities in eastern Libya formed the NTC as an interim rebel administration in the early days of the uprising against Col Gaddafi. The NTC was joined by Mustapha Mohammed Abdul Jalil as it’s chairman. Colonel Quadhafi’s second son, Saif al-Islam, brought him into the government as justice minister in 2007 to cast himself in a more reform-minded light. Mr. Mustapha Abdul Jalil won praise from human rights groups and western powers for his efforts to reform Libya's criminal code during his tenure at the ministry; had served as justice minister in the Quadhafi regime, and was sent to Benghazi in the early days of the revolt to deal with the protesters. But he quits on 21st February in protest at “the excessive use of violence against unarmed protesters” and within days became chairman of the NTC. Mr Abdul Jalil worked for more than two decades as a judge, during which time he gained a reputation for consistently ruling against the government.

In a wave of defections from the regime by military commanders, ruling circles and others, by swelling the opposition and leaving the pro-Quadhafi camp in large number, and now he is more isolated. Some reports said, Muammar Quadhafi’s inner-circle of advisors was crumbling following the defection of the most significant diplomat, among the latest, the Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa, who has reportedly fled through cross-border trip to Tunisia first, then defected to Britain to join the protesters lately, many exile opposition figures called him the "Blackbox of Quadhafi", believed he was behind international crimes of Muammar Quadhafi, as he served chief of foreign intelligence service in previous years for about a decade before he appointed to Libyan foreign minister, some fear the ex-Minister Moussa Koussa, might have some more new information to offer British authorities about the Lockerby aircraft bombing, in which he was a key negotiator on the issue.

Colonel Quadhafi attempts to offer such concessions to the rebel Interim-Government in Benghazi and kill peaceful protesters at the same time, has only resulted in his hanging onto power by his fingernails while he and his sons are in a "do or die" situation with no light at the end during the Libyan protests. Scholars have been pilloried in the media in recent months for supposedly having cosied up to Muammar Quadhafi. Sir Howard Davies resigned as director of London School of Economics (LSE), which awarded Saif Al-Islam his Doctorate, which some allege it was plagiarised, and took money for the school from the Libyan regime. Regardless of Saif’s more moderate posture in recent years, the true colours of Muammar Quadhafi were revealed by his murderous stance during the Libyan protests, Saif’s recent support for his father suggests that he is not the real liberal reformer many took him to be. As a symbolic diplomatic victory for the rebel-opposition, France, which has been at the forefront of the international air-campaign, struck a more forceful tone, the
League of Arab nations insisted for a UN sponsored no-fly zone to protect civilian protesters which were under an attack by the Libyan armed units. The French-led anti-aircraft fires erupted in the Libyan capital on Sunday of the 20th of March, 2011, marking the start of the international airstrikes, as Libyan rebels were more jubilant after the first round of strikes, which came as the overwhelming firepower of Quadhafi’s forces had threatened to crush their month-old uprising. A top French diplomat said, "Libyan politicians could be targeted since they gave orders to the Libyan military, the rebels hope that the allied intervention will turn the tide in Libya's internal conflict, breaking sieges by Quadhafi’s forces on several rebel-held cities and eventually leading to the Libyan leader ouster after nearly 42 years on power. The strategic city of Sirte, birhtown of Quadhafi, which considred Libya’s de-facto capital, is dominated by members of his "Ghadhadfa-tribe" it's loss would perhaps be a symbolic blow, and will open the way to the capital, Tripoli. Rebel forces have been helped by the arrival on the front of more trained soldiers, heavier weapons somehow trained-skills, but they are still struggling to match the more experienced and better equipped government troops even with the aid of allied airstrikes as pro-Quadhafi forces still have clear advantage because they have the armor and artillery, said military experts.

Recently the Libyan regime has softened it’s public stance against any compromise that would end the fighting in Libya, but a spokesman for the government “any changes must led by our leader Muammar Al-Quadhafi, who had ruled the country for more than four decades, do not decide our future from abroad, give us a proposal for change from within, we could have any political system, any changes ; constitution, election, anything, but the Libyan leader has to lead this forward” he told reporters in Tripoli, chastising western powers who have a “personal problem with the leader” and economic interests they believe would be, better served if Quadhafi’s government collapsed. The United Nation security council authorized the operation to protect Libyan civilians after pro-Quadhafi forces launched attacks against the protesters who demanded that he step-down. The rebels were in danger of being crushed by his forces boasting they would bring him down as the airstrikes that began early morning gave immediate, if temporary, relief to Benghazi, which the day before had been under a heavy attack. The allied airstrikes campaign have crippled government forces came in the nick of time; an expeditionary force of pro-Quadhafi troops had made a foray into Benghazi on mid-March before being repelled by a desperate rearguard action by the rebel-fighters, then the rebels emboldened to advance less than two weeks after they had seemed at the brink of defeat. Some western countries, have sent officials to make formal contact with the rebel opposition in eastern Libya, and assesses the strength and needs of the rebel forces in Benghazi, the rebels de-facto capital, in the event to decide onto support them politically and diplomatically, as perhaps to use a covert-action of shipment of arms to the rebels, and train them.

Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi, who has a legacy of brutality, called the international assault "simply a colonial crusader aggression that may ignite another large-scale crusader war". In an open letter written to the international community, Al-Quadhafi said, "the rebels, whose he called them as "Germ-insects" were supported by the Al-Qaida terrorist network, what is happening now is providing a cover for Al-Qaida through airstrikes and missiles to enable them to control North Africa and turn it into a new Afghanistan", accusing the international community of carrying-out genocide against the Libyans. Many analysts believe, possibly the political-power curtain is closing on a man who has had so much money, but not much friends, and who has done everything he fancied for over forty years as he has not enjoyed any trust and warmth, that his Tunisian or Egyptian counterparts have had, in the end, western military intervention remained essential to support and empower the faltering rebels in the east.

As analysts, any long-term settlement poses tough questions about the fate of Quadhafi’s family and the new leader of a post-Quadhafi nation, and the rebel opposition repeatedly rejected any solution
that would involved one of his sons taking power. But elsewhere in the world, the rebel opposition saw success in their efforts to establish an internationally recognized government in eastern Libya, forging tighter links with Britain and Italy, both potentially major markets for Libyan Oil, while Italy, Libya's former colonial ruler offered diplomatic recognition to the rebel opposition council based in Benghazi, becoming the third country to do so after France and the Gulf-Arab state of Qatar. The tiny Arab kingdom of Qatar, is the first Arab state to swiftly recognize the rebels in-control of Benghazi as legitimate authority of the country, the wealthy Gulf-arab state of Qatar is one of the few Arab countries providing warplanes to the NATO air-campaign and has helped Libyan rebels sell-out to buy weapons and supplies, newsreports say, the allied aerial-campaign have begun to target pro-Quadhafi's armored units, on the grounds that they represent the greatest danger to civilians with targeting priorities included mechanized forces, artillery units, mobile surface-to-air missile sites, and their command and control. In the western city of Misrata (Mitsurata), the pro-Quadhafi forces are hiding their heavy armoured vehicles are using human-shields, after allied airstrikes, now known as "Operation Odyssey Dawn". At the latest, in protest against the Libyan leader, Mr. Shokri Ghanem 68, the chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) has reportedly defected to the rebels through Tunisia on the 17th of May, 2011.

A North Atlantic Treaty organization (NATO) warplanes bombed Muammar Quadhafi's second youngest son, Saif Al-Arab Al-Quadhafi 29, and three of Quadhafi's grandchildren all younger than 12, were killed during a direct attempt to assassinate the Libyan leader as Mr. Muammar Al-Quadhafi and his wife, Safia were in their son's home at the time but were not injured. Since then the Libyan leader is shuttling b/n Tripoli's hospitals to elude nighttime raids by NATO jets, he is moving b/n the hospitals because he knows NATO aircraft won't bomb them, is staying no longer than one night in any hospital, he is also concerned that senior supporters in the military and government may turn against him. It’s to be recalled that Muammar Al-Quadhafi had an adopted daughter who was killed in a 1986 US airstrike on his Bab El-Aziziya residential compound, a retaliation for the bombing attack on a German La Belle disco in which two US servicemen were killed. And the US at the time blamed Libya for the Disco blast. Muammar Al-Quadhafi, who has been in power for more than four decades, has fought fiercely to put-down an uprising against his regime that began with protests inspired by a wave of Mid-east unrest and escalated into an armed rebellion since mid-February, 2011. The Libyan rebels rejected an offer from Mr. Quadhafi for negotiations to end the conflict in his country.

Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi is believed to have stashed $200 bn dollars all over the world. Shortly after the Libyan uprising last February, the British Government announced that it expected to seize “around £20 billion in liquid assets of the Libyan regime, mostly in London.” The Swiss Government similarly issued an order for the immediate freeze of assets belonging to Al-Quadhafi and his entourage in the amount of 613 million Swiss francs about USD $658 million, with an additional 205 million francs about USD$220 million in paper or fiduciary operations. In 2008, Al-Quadhafi's Swiss holdings amounted to 5.7 billion in cash and 812 million francs in paper and fiduciary operations. In 2006, the Libyan Sovereign Wealth Fund had investments of about $70 billion. The U.S. has frozen about $37 billion in Libyan assets.

The ICC pre-trial chamber in the Hague, the Netherlands, ruled-out the chief-prosecutor is seeking to arrest the Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi and two others for crimes against humanity, his second son Saif Al-Islam, and Quadhafi's son-in-law, the intelligence chief Abdullah Al-Sanussi bore the greatest responsibility for widespread and systematic attacks on civilians. The ICC chief-prosecutor said, "pro-Quadhafi forces attacked Libyan civilians in their homes and in public spaces, shot demonstrators with live ammunition, used heavy weaponry against participants in funeral processions, and placed snipers to kill those leaving mosques after prayers", "pro-Quadhafi forces have prepared a list with names of alleged dissidents, and they are being arrested, put into prisons in
Tripoli and tortured”, he added. Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi 69, ruled Libya with an Iron fist for almost 42 years.

On 22 August, as the rebels battled Col. Quadhafi's supporters for control of Tripoli, Mr. Abdul Jalil declared that the "Quadhfi's era is over". He is expected to play a prominent role in any future government and has set out his vision of a nation guided by moderate Islam. "We are a Muslim nation, with a moderate Islam, and we will maintain that," he recently told crowds of his supporters in Tripoli. Colonel Muammar Quadhafi seized control of Libya in September 1969 in a bloodless coup when he was just 27 years old. The then young and dashing army captain and his small band of military officers overthrew the head of monarch King Idris Mohammed I, setting up a new Libyan Arab Republic that over the years became increasingly isolated from the rest of the world. It's to be recalled Muammar Al-Quadhafi took over the top spot as the world's most wanted man after Osama Bin Laden was killed by US troops in Pakistan. He had been believed to be hiding in the vast Libyan desert while calling onto his supporters to rise up and sweep the rebels what he calls them rats, insects, drug-adicts, and holigans. In mid October, 2011, the colonel's autocratic government was brought to an end by a six-month uprising and ensuing civil war. After months of near-stalemate, the rebels stormed into Tripoli, and several weeks later Colonel Quadhafi was killed when his last holdout was overrun. The country is currently governed by the National Transitional Council that emerged from the rebellion and has pledged to turn Libya into a pluralist, democratic state. A former Roman colony, Libya saw invasions by Vandals, Byzantines, Arabs, Turks and more recently Italians before gaining independence in 1951.

On the 20th of October, 2011 the National Transitional Council said that it's fighters reportedly cornered the despotic Libyan ruler of 42 years and shot him dead after injury in the town of Sirte, where he had been born and a stronghold of supporters, which finally fell to the rebels after weeks of tough fighting. According to newsreports, the former Libyan leader Muammar Al-Quadhafi, has more recently been renowned for 42-year mercurial rule was to have been killed following the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) airstrike on his convoy fleeing his beleaguered hometown of Sirte, many were killed, but Al-Quadhafi and some of his supporters were said to have escaped, taking cover in a nearby drain before Quadhafi was found by government fighters. The ex-Libyan leader had been on the run for weeks after being chased out of the capital Tripoli by NATO bombers and the rebel TNC troops. The word of Al-Quadhafi's capture and death triggered celebrations in the streets of Tripoli and other cities with insurgent fighters waving their weapons and dancing jubilantly. The body of the former Libyan leader was taken to a location which is being kept secret for security reasons. Images filmed on mobile phones before and after Quadhafi's death showed him wounded and bloodied but clearly alive after his capture in his hometown of Sirte, and then killed in cold blood amidst a jostling crowd of anti-Quadhafi fighters. Arguements over his burial and his killing after being captured raised serious of questions, but seeing him being beaten badly while he demands legal rights, to the sound of gunfire, many assume he was simply shot killed. If "Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi was killed after his capture, it would constitute a war crime and those responsible should be brought to justice, it's something that an investigation needs to look into "under the Geneva convention which lay-down the rules of conduct in armed conflict, it's prohibited to torture, humilate or murder detainees", said the Amnesty International. The Hague, the Netherlands based, International Criminal Court (ICC) says Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhaf's killing may be a war crime. The death of Libya's former leader "creates suspicions" of war crimes, says the chief-prosecutor of the ICC. The ICC was raising the concern with Libya's National Transitional Council (TNC). The NTC officials initially said he died in crossfire, after being caught by rebels in his hometown of Sirte, but promised to investigate the matter following pressures by western countries.
Under Islamic tradition, he should have been buried quickly within 24 hours in a Muslim cemetery as the Transitional National Council officials themselves are not agreeing on the place of burial. The rebels now control the entire country. Conflicting reports on the fates of Al-Quadhafi’s seven sons and one daughter, Aisha, have emerged at various points over the last months of conflict. Libya’s transition forces have claimed at various points since the fall of Tripoli in August to have captured or killed some of Quadhafi’s sons only for them later to reappear. But according to latest information, five members of Quadhafi’s family including his wife Safia to be living in exile, three sons and his one daughter, Aisha in neighboring Algeria, and the one son in Niger. Three of Quadhafi’s sons appear to be dead. The fate of Quadhafi’s most well-known son and onetime presumed heir apparent, Saif-Al-Islam appears to be a mystery while some newsreports claim that he was captured by the transition forces while others reports claim he has fled like his other brother to the neighboring Niger. It has to be recalled that there were unconfirmed reports from Libya's transition forces that they had captured Saif Al-Islam Al-Quadhafi. The longtime Libyan dictator Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi, his son Mutassim and a top aide, the ex-Minister of Defence were buried in an islamic ceremony at dawn on the 25th of October, 2011 in a secret location with a few relatives and officials in attendance. The burial closed the chapter on Quadhafi’s nearly 42 years rule and the 8-month civil war to oust him, but did not silence the international calls for an investigation into whether the widely dispired tyrant was executed by his captors.

Two days after Muammar Al-Quadhafi’s funeral, the Interim government has also declared Libya is fully liberated, it had said Saif Al-Islam was captured, but at the very same time the 39-year old appeared on foreign TV. But many believed Muammar Al-Quadhafi's second son Saif-Al-Islam is now in Sudan’s western region of Darfur under the protection of a rebel leader in the area. A Khartoum based newspaper quoted as saying Saif-Al-Islam and other former Libyan government officials were crossed the border from Chad and are being sheltered in Darfur rebel-held areas, but a Sudanese Army spokesman called the report "mere speculation" at the time. On the 31 October, 2011 the United Nations security council has voted to end international military operations in Libya. At the hunt for Saif Al-Islam intensifies, his younger brother Saadi Al-Quadhafi who escaped the country in September as rebel forces began to close in, has publicly lashed out about the death of his father and brother. As news and video footage of his death surfaced, the UN High Commission for Human Rights called for an investigation into the events surrounding his death, though video seems to show him in rebel custody, he allegedly died in crossfire. The Libyan interim government officially declared the country liberated, and has promised to bring democracy to the nation.

A new interim government is expected to be declared within a month, with elections for a constitutional assembly expected within 8 to 10 months. Meanwhile, Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi's second son Saif-Al-Islam Al-Quadhafi the only wanted member of the ousted ruling family to remain at large was captured on the 19th November, 2011 as he traveled with aids in a convoy in Libya’s southern desert, the Libyan Transitional National Government officials said. A thunderous celebratory gunfire shook the Libyan capital as the news spread. Saif Al-Islam Al-Quadhafi was formerly considered Muammar Al-Quadhafi’s heir apparent, long drew western by touting himself as a liberalizing reformer. On the 20th November, 2011 Abdullah Al-Sanussi Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi's brother-in-law and fugitive spy Chief has been captured, he who has not yet been seen in custody, was one of the last senior figures from the Al-Quadhafi regime still on the run, he is said to have been arrested at his sister’s house in the southern town of Sabha. He was regarded as the late-leader’s right/hand man and one of the regime's most feared figures, Mr. Abdullah Al-Sanussi, 62, is being sought by the ICC in connection with the repression of protests against Al-Quadhafi’s rule.
The ruling National Transitional Council (NTC) is now recognized as the Libyan Transitional Government (NTG), the nation's sole legitimate authority by most of the world's major powers, and has moved its headquarters to the capital, Tripoli. But NTC leaders have made it clear that the organisation is an interim body that will oversee a transition to democratic elections, expected in 2013.

Side note; Mahmoud Jibril - head of NTC Executive Board sometimes referred to as the NTC's prime minister, US-educated Mahmoud Jibril is head of its Executive Board and in the early days of the rebellion was the most prominent voice of the NTC on the international stage. He is reputedly a capable technocrat and is said to make many of the day-to-day decisions involved in running the NTC.

Side note; As Berbers call themselves "Amazigh", the Libyan tribe demands recognition. They consider themselves the original Libyans and they suffered decades of repression and discrimination at the hands of the Muammar Quadhafi regime. With now it has gone, they are hoping for a brighter future with the right to express their heritage and recognition of the sacrifices they made during Libya's bloody eight-month civil war. But now that Quadhafi has gone "we want our rights, guaranteed by a new Libyan constitution", explains an Amazigh rebel fighter. Amazigh make up 5 to 10% of Libya's 6 million population.

Side note; The ruling Libyan National Transitional Council (NTC) and its Interim government now face the formidable challenge of imposing order, disbanding the former rebel forces, rebuilding the economy, creating functioning institutions and managing the pledged transition to democracy and the rule of law. In October 2011, the National Transitional Council said it would hold elections to a Public National Conference within eight months. The body will appoint an interim government and a constituent authority tasked with drafting a constitution within 60 days. A new Libyan constitution would be expected to rewrite in early-2012 and to hold a general election by mid-2012 (tentatively 7-8th June). The constitution would be put to a popular referendum, if it’s approved, general elections will take place within six months. Libya possesses considerable reserves of Oil and Gas.

Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi (Abu-Minyar)

The slain Libyan leader was indicted on 27th June, 2011 on two counts of crimes against humanity during the uprising against his government. The ICC alleged that he planned, in conjunction with his inner circle, a policy of violent oppression of popular uprisings in the early weeks of the NATO led war against him. He is alleged to have formulated a plan whereby Libyan state security forces under his authority were ordered to use all means necessary to quell the public protests against his government. Muammar Al Quadhafi was killed on 20th October, 2011 and the ICC terminated proceedings against him on 22 November, 2011.

Saif Al-Islam Al Quadhafi

The late Libyan leader's second son was indicted on 27 June, 2011 on two counts of crimes against humanity during the Libyan uprising. Although, not an official member of the government, the ICC accuses him of the same crimes as his late father. Both the ICC and Libya want to put Saif Al-Islam Al-Quadhafi on trial for crimes under the former regime

Abdullah Al Senussi

He was indicted on 27 June, 2011 on two counts of crimes against humanity during the Libyan uprising. As the former head of Libyan military intelligence, he is alleged to have planned, in conjunction with the late Libyan leader Colonel Muammar Al Quadhafi, to use all means necessary to
quell public protests against the government. Abdullah Al Senussi is also accused of having commanded forces in and around Benghazi, the second largest city and having directly instructed the troops to attack civilians demonstrating in the city. Both the ICC and Libya want to put the spy chief on trial for crimes under the former regime. Abdullah Al-Senussi’s whereabouts are unknown for the time being.

Side note: Documents found in the British embassy in Tripoli and revealed by "The Sunday Telegraph" show that Hana Quaddafi, supposedly killed 25 years ago, was actually granted a two-year visa to come to Britain as recently as October last year. The UK even paid her application fee. For the relatives of the Lockerbie victims it is a terrible betrayal. Quaddafi had used Hana’s alleged death, aged 18 months, as a propaganda coup and to suggest to the British families that he too had suffered as they had. Dr. Jim Swire, whose 24-year-old daughter Flora was blown up on Pan-Am flight 103, was even shown - by Quaddafi himself - a photograph of Hana, covered in blood and on the verge of death, lying on a hospital trolley. That meeting took place in Tripoli 20 years ago and had a profound effect on Dr. Swire and his attitude towards the Libyan dictator. That the British Government never bothered to inform Dr Swire and the other Lockerbie relatives what really happened to Hana has simply added to the sense of betrayal. "If the Government knew the story about Hana was phoney then it makes me angry," said Dr. Swire. “The Foreign Office has always kept me in the dark. In an ideal world the CIA and the people from MI6 should have sat down with relatives and said 'we cannot make this public, but this is what really happened'. But nothing of that sort ever happened. That is a source of considerable anger for me."

Side note: Libya demands handover of Quadhafi spy chief Abdullah Al-Senussi’ Libya's Transitional Government has formally requested the handover of Colonel Quadhafi's former intelligence chief following his arrest in Mauritania. A spokesman for the new government in Tripoli "insisted" Brigadier General Abdullah al-Senussi be extradited to Libya to face trial. Interpol says it has issued an international "red notice" arrest warrant at Libya's request. Al-Senussi is also being sought by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of crimes against humanity. In addition, France wants to extradite him in connection with a bomb attack on a plane in 1989. Mauritania has already said it wants to carry out its own investigation before considering any extradition requests. Abdullah al-Senussi usually known as "Black box of Quadhafi" was held at the airport in the Mauritanian capital, Nouakchott, after flying in from Morocco using a false passport, officials said. However, Mauritania has not yet provided any evidence of his arrest. It is believed he is being held at the offices of the Mauritanian Intelligence Agency. An International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant issued in June 2011; but Mauritania not a signatory to Rome statute, so direct transfer unlikely; Libya likely to strongly resist ICC transfer request as public will demand justice in Libya and officials say extradition process already underway; but international concern over fairness of trial. Already sentenced to life in prison in France; French authorities have involved in the arrest; but France may be obliged to hand him to the ICC. An era of people of unlimited power and longevity is coming to a close, embrace a better future for that allows political transition and real reform that meets the aspirations of the Libyan people, as has happened during the revolution of 1948, which threw out monarchies allover Europe and installed representative governments.

Side note: Libya bans religious political parties: Libyan authorities have banned the formation of political parties based on religious principles ahead of elections scheduled to take place in June, 2012. Parties based on faith, tribe or ethnicity will not be eligible to take part, a government spokesman said. The National Transitional Council said the law, passed was designed to preserve "national unity". But analysts say it is likely to infuriate religious parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood. "Parties are not allowed to be based on religion or ethnicity or tribe," the National Transitional Council (TNC) spokesman Mohammed al-Harizy told Reuters. Meantime, Libya's Belhadj
quits military post for politics. Libyan Islamist commander Abdel Hakim Belhadj has resigned his military post in a bid to enter politics. Mr. Belhadj, a key brigade leader in the 2011 toppling of Colonel Quadhafi, plans to run in elections. He is a former member of an Islamist insurgent group which sought to overthrow Gaddafi in the 1990s. Mr. Belhadj is currently taking legal action against the UK authorities, alleging they were complicit in his 2004 rendition to Libya. He claims he was interrogated by agents from countries including Britain and United States while detained in Libya. Mr. Belhaj said he had handed in his resignation on Monday night, telling AFP news agency that it was "now time to turn to politics". He said he quits as head of Tripoli's Military Council in order to compete in the next elections as leader of The Nation party, which will be launched.

Side note;- Ex-Quadhafi spy chief Abdullah Al-Senussi 'charged' in Mauritania. Former Libyan intelligence chief Abdullah Al-Senussi has been charged in Mauritania with illegally entering the country, officials say. Mr. Senussi, who fled Libya after the fall of Muammar Al- Quadhafi, was held at Nouakchott airport after flying in from Morocco in March, 2012. Both Libya and the International Criminal Court want him extradited to face trial for crimes against humanity. Mauritanian officials say he faces trial for using false travel documents. A judicial source told, he had been placed in a specially prepared prison cell ahead of his trial. The Interim Libyan government has said it wants him back on Libyan soil so he can stand trial for numerous allegations of murder and human rights abuses while he was Quadhafi's head of intelligence. Nicknamed "the butcher", Mr. Senussi was Quadhafi's brother-in-law and has been described as one of his closest aides. He has been implicated in the massacre in 1996 of more than 1,000 inmates at the Abu-Salim prison in Tripoli. In March, 2012 soon after Mr. Senussi's arrest, Libya's Deputy Prime Minister Mustapha Abushagur said Mauritania had agreed to handover him. Mauritanian officials have said no decision has been reached on his extradition. Interpol has issued an international "red notice" call for his arrest at Libya's request. Mr. Senussi is also wanted on a 2011 ICC arrest warrant in connection with the violent suppression of protests during last year's Libyan uprising that toppled the late Colonel Quadhafi. In addition, he is sought by the authorities in France after a court there sentenced him to life in prison for his involvement in the 1989 attack on a French plane that killed 170 people. Mr. Abdullah Al-Senussi was seen as late Libyan leader Muammar Quadhafi's right-hand man.

Side note;- The concept of federalism is exciting passions nowadays in Libya. Hundreds of people danced and sang songs about federalism in the city of Benghazi, as local leaders proclaimed the eastern part of Libya to be the semi-autonomous "State of Cyrenaica". Outside the courthouse on the sea front that same day, a smaller number of people gathered to proclaim their implacable opposition to the idea: "No, no feredaliya," one man shouted out of his car window as he drove past. The drive behind the push for more autonomy in Benghazi seems on the face of it quite reasonable. Many in Libya's second city felt they were marginalised under Colonel Muammar Quadhafi. Benghazi was known as a city of dissent, a place where intellectuals met and formed opposition movements. So the Colonel starved it of funds. The east is also where most of the country's wealth lies, in the form of oil reserves. So, say the framers of the declaration of autonomy, "we just want to ensure we get our fair share." But the presence of the oil is also the reason why the move has met such ferocious opposition elsewhere. Or at least, it is one of the reasons. Mustapha Abdul-Jalil, the chairman of Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC) wasted little time in taking to the airwaves to denounce the declaration as a foreign-inspired plot. He would, he added, defend Libyan national unity, "with force" if necessary. But what exactly are the "separatists" calling for? Thair Elhairy, who calls himself the spokesman for the Congress of the People of Cyrenaica, believes the region should revert to a federal arrangement that was in force during the 1950s. Then, Libya was divided into three administrative regions: Tripolitania in the northwest, Fezzan in the southwest, and Cyrenaica in the east. Each exercised a significant degree of autonomy though regional legislatures. Libyan voters
Residents in Benghazi, the city where the Libyan uprising began, have voted in historic local elections. More than 400 people contested seats on the 44-member local council, even though the remit of local authorities has yet to be set. This was the first time such elections have been held in the city since the 1960s and turnout was high. National elections are expected to be held in June. Until then, the mandate of local councils will remain unclear. The BBC’s reporter in Libya says people in Benghazi were excited and motivated to be taking part in a political process. Social networking sites were awash with pictures of people showing their inked fingers to prove they voted and some polling stations had to stay open for an extra hour to meet demand.

Side note; The Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset Al-Megrahi has been buried in a largely private ceremony in a western suburb of the Libyan capital, Tripoli. Al-Megrahi, the only person convicted over the December, 1988 bombing above Scotland which killed 270 people, died at his home in Libya. He was convicted by a special court in the Netherlands in 2001. He was freed from a Scottish jail in 2009 on compassionate grounds as he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The BBC’s reporter in Tripoli says Megrahi’s body was transferred discreetly in an Ambulance to the burial site, followed by a convoy of male relatives close behind. The funeral was very much a private family affair and the funeral took place in the suburb of Janzour, where many other members of his family lay buried, the BBC correspondent says. “His pain is over now - he is with God,” said his brother Muhammad, quoted by the AFP news agency. Another brother, Abdulhakim, said that Megrahi’s health had deteriorated quickly and he died at home in Tripoli. Megrahi’s release sparked the fury of many of the relatives of the victims of the Lockerbie bombing. The US - whose citizens accounted for 189 of the dead - also criticised the move. But some of the relatives of those killed believe he was innocent. In Libya, a spokesman for the National Transitional Council (TNC) said Megrahi’s death would not close the Lockerbie file. Abdelbaset Al-Megrahi, a former Libyan intelligence officer, always denied any responsibility for the bombing of Pan-American Flight 103 in December 1988.

Side note; Libyan ex-spy chief Abu Zeid Omar Dorda charged over protester deaths. The first senior official from the former Libyan regime has been charged in court in connection with the conflict that toppled Muammar Al-Quadhafi. Abu Zeid Omar Dorda, who was the head of external intelligence, appeared in the Tripoli court behind a metal cage. He denied all six charges, which included ordering the fatal shooting of protesters last year. The case has been adjourned until 26 June, 2012 as his lawyer asked for more time to review the case. Mr. Omar Dorda was arrested in September 2011, the month before Colonel Quadhafi was killed. The BBC’s correspondent in the capital, Tripoli, says his trial is seen as a test case for Libya’s judiciary and its capacity to deal with high-profile cases. My brother is one of the Libyan people who looks out for his country, for its people and it’s safety”, quoted as saying Abdullah Dorda younger brother of Abu Zeid Dorda. Mr. Dorda is charged with "mobilising security forces to fire bullets at the heads and chests of civilians" and "preventing, through the use of force and intimidation, the staging of peaceful protests", the Libya's state-run news agency Wal reports. He is also charged with arming his ethnic group with the purpose of inciting civil strife during Libya’s seven-month rebellion last year.

Side note; The Libyans in their first Abu Salim jail massacre remembrance; Libyans are for the first time publicly marking the anniversary of a prison massacre in which nearly 1,300 inmates were shot dead 16 years ago. The prisoners at the notorious Abu Salim jail in the capital, Tripoli, were killed after a protest demanding better conditions and fairer trials. Since the overthrow of long-time ruler Muammar Gaddafi last year, the jail has become an exhibition gallery. Quadhafi’s brother-in-law is accused of giving the order to shoot. Abdullah al-Senussi, who served as head of military intelligence, was arrested in Mauritania last November, a month after Col Gaddafi was killed - ending the eight-month uprising. The BBC’s correspondent in Tripoli says the Abu Salim prison is now a site where...
former inmates, their families and others can publicly pay their respects to the 1,269 prisoners gunned down in 1996 and those who were incarcerated there for years on end. Libyans have been streaming in to look at items exhibited in one of the prison’s inner courtyards, including prison slippers, pictures of those killed, and secret notes written by inmates, she says. US-based rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW) says Libyans can finally hope for justice, adding that suspected perpetrators of the killings should be treated humanely and get fair trials. Our reporter says justice is still on a rocky path in post-revolutionary Libya, with old scores being settled at times with the gun. However, the judiciary has recently started prosecuting members of the former government, she says. Nicknamed “the butcher”, Mr. Abdullah Al-Senussi was one of the most feared figures in Quahafi’s Libya and is wanted for by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged atrocities committed against anti-Quadhafi protesters last year. The west African state of Mauritania has charged him with entering the country illegally, while the Libyan transitional government is demanding his extradition.

Libyans have been voting in their first free national election for 60 years, which heralded a new era of the country. They are selecting a temporary assembly which will have the task of picking a cabinet and a prime minister. Voting began late in some cities where gunmen disrupted voting, and one person was killed in a shooting close to a polling station in Ajdabiya. Nevertheless, overall turnout has been described as high, with voters choosing their first government since Col Gaddafi came to power in 1969. Few Libyans remember their last national vote in 1965, when no political parties were allowed. Even fewer took part in their country's first parliamentary elections in February 1952, shortly after independence. Libyans have been voting in their first free national election for 60 years. They are selecting a temporary assembly which will have the task of picking a cabinet and a prime minister. Voting began late in some cities where gunmen disrupted voting, and one person was killed in a shooting close to a polling station in Ajdabiya. Nevertheless, overall turnout has been described as high, with voters choosing their first government since Col Gaddafi came to power in 1969. Few Libyans remember their last national vote in 1965, when no political parties were allowed. Even fewer took part in their country's first parliamentary elections in February 1952, shortly after independence. Libyans have been voting in their first free national election for 60 years. They are selecting a temporary assembly which will have the task of picking a cabinet and a prime minister. Voting began late in some cities where gunmen disrupted voting, and one person was killed in a shooting close to a polling station in Ajdabiya. Nevertheless, overall turnout has been described as high, with voters choosing their first government since Col Gaddafi came to power in 1969. Few Libyans remember their last national vote in 1965, when no political parties were allowed. Even fewer took part in their country's first parliamentary elections in February 1952, shortly after independence. In Tripoli's Martyr's Square, crowds started gathering before midday to wave flags, sing and honk their car horns as traffic came to a standstill. When the polls closed, the celebrations got bigger and louder. In the east of the country, where the revolution that ended the rule of Muammar Quadhafi started, the election has been marred by violence and the sacking of a polling station. With 2,600 individuals and 400 political organisations to choose from, some voters appeared bewildered by the choice on offer, but the heavy voting I saw in Tripoli was ordered and calm. One man, toothless and at least 80 years old, said he had never seen Libyans
queue so quietly. Polls opened at 08:00 (06:00 GMT), with reports of queues forming outside polling stations in the capital Tripoli. "I feel free at last. It's a feeling I cannot describe: Like a human being," Asmaddin Arifi told the BBC. Many voters carried the black, red and green flag of the Libyan revolution as they went to the polls. Armed men stopped voters casting their ballots in the port town of Ras Lanuf. Voting was also disrupted in Brega and Ajdabiya. Details of the fatal shooting in Ajdabiya were unclear but Deputy Interior Minister Omar Al-Khadrawi told reporters in Tripoli that it took place as three men in a car tried to "threaten the voting process", Reuters news agency reported. The head of the election commission Nuri Al-Abbar said that 94% of polling stations across the country had opened normally. Officials said later that voting had taken place in all of Libya's electoral districts and that voting hours were being extended to allow everyone to cast their ballots. UN Libya envoy Ian Martin said the disruption in the east was unlikely to undermine the credibility of the election. Many people in eastern Libya are concerned that the oil-rich area will be under-represented in the assembly and marginalised as it was during Muammar Quadhafi's 42-year rule. The region has been allotted only 60 seats in the 200-seat assembly, while the west will have 100 seats and the south 40, under the system devised by the outgoing National Transitional Council (NTC). Election officials acknowledged that the election was imperfect but insisted it was crucial for the vote to go ahead.

The Historic Libyan National Elections of 7th July, 2012

2.8 million registered voters from around 3-3.5 million eligible (45% women)

2,639 individual candidates (competing for 120 seats in 69 constituencies)

374 party lists from more than100 political entities (competing for 80 party seats in 20 constituencies)

599 men registered for party seats (44%)

88 women registered for individual seats (3%)

Source: The UN and the Libyan High National Electoral Commission (HNEC)

"It's important for the stability of the country," Salim Ben Tahir from the National Election Commission told the BBC. "We can do it better in the future but the NTC and the current government are losing legitimacy. People aren't respecting them any more and things are getting out of hand." Some former rebels have tried to derail the vote by targeting the oil industry, large parts of which are located in the east. They have shut down several oil terminals, including those at Brega, Ras Lanouf and Sidra, and a significant part of Libya's oil exporting capacity has been disrupted. In an attempt to defuse the situation, the NTC has said the new parliament will no longer be responsible for naming the panel that will draft Libya's new constitution. The 60-member committee will be elected in a separate vote at a later date. Around 2.9 million people are eligible to vote for the 2,600 candidates standing for the new General National Congress, less than a year after Colonel Quadhafi was toppled after an eight-month uprising. There are countless political parties taking part in the election but the biggest to emerge so far is the Justice and Construction Party, made up mostly of Muslim Brotherhood members. Libya has Africa’s largest reserve oil.

Side note:- Saif Al-Islam Quadhafi seeks Hague trial: Colonel Gaddafi's son has said he wants to be put on trial in The Hague, rather than in his home country, his lawyers have said. Saif al-Islam said if he was executed after a trial in Libya then it would be tantamount to murder, according to documents submitted to the International Criminal Court. The 40-year-old is being held by militia in the city of Zintan. He has been indicted by the ICC for crimes against humanity. Libya’s interim
government has so far refused to hand him over for trial in the Netherlands, where the international court is based, arguing that he should face justice in his own country. Colonel Gaddafi, whose autocratic rule lasted for 42 years, was killed in unclear circumstances after being captured by rebels in October, in an act criticised by rights groups. "I am not afraid to die but if you execute me after such a trial you should just call it murder and be done with it," Saif al-Islam was quoted by lawyers as saying. In June, a team sent by the ICC were arrested after meeting Saif al-Islam, and held for more than three weeks. The documents filed to the court said that during that meeting an official who had pretended to be an illiterate guard had stopped an ICC lawyer from taking a sworn statement from Saif al-Islam. "The 'guard', who is actually Mr Ahmed Amer - a councillor who speaks several languages - was planted in the room to deliberately trick the delegation," the filing said, according to Reuters. "He came back into the room and (in the presence of the ICC interpreter), started shouting that this statement was very dangerous, violated Libyan national security, and that the Defence could not have it back." The meeting was cut short after 45 minutes and their documents were confiscated, the lawyers said. The team were later detained. The actions of the authorities appeared to show they viewed it as "illegal, treason, or a violation of national security for either Mr Gaddafi or his Counsel to indicate that Mr Gaddafi does not wish to be tried before Libyan courts", the lawyers said in the filing. Libyan officials accused lawyer Melinda Taylor, who was leading the ICC delegation, of smuggling spying devices and a coded letter to Saif al-Islam during the meeting. Saif Al-Islam Quadhafi has been held by militiamen in Libya since November, 2011.

Side note:- Libya's former Quadhafi’s critic Mahmoud Jibril calls for national unity. Libya's former Interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril has called for national unity between political parties. Mr Jibril said political factions must work together to restore order, which the state was too weak to enforce. "The most important priority right now for all political parties is to unite behind one objective, bringing back the state back to our life," Mr Jibril told the BBC. He is said to have done well in the first national post-Quadhafi elections. Mr Jibril, who was interim prime minister for seven months during the uprising against Colonel Muammar Quadhafi’s last year, now leads a bloc of political parties called the National Forces Alliance. Local media reports have said Mr Jibril’s alliance leads the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood in parliamentary elections but official results have not yet been announced. Mr. Jibril said he believed Libya needed a combination of both a presidential and parliamentary system. He stressed the need for Libya to establish army and police forces to ensure law and order across the country. "You need swiftness, because you need stability and order, but this should not be done at the expense of the democratic process," he said. Mr. Jibril, who was educated in the United States and whose bloc is seen by many as broadly liberal, called on parties to form a coalition government, something which rival politicians have tentatively welcomed. Regional differences and rivalries, which lubricated the uprising and conflict last year, have persisted after the removal of the Quadhafi regime. In the eastern city of Benghazi, the cradle of last year’s uprising, protesters attacked polling stations, aggrieved at what they say is a disproportionately small number of assembly seats allocated to the region. On the eve of the vote, the National Transitional Council which has been running Libya since Colonel Muammar Quadhafi was ousted, said the new parliament will no longer be responsible for naming the panel that will draft Libya’s new constitution. The 60-member committee will be elected in a separate vote at a later date.

In 8 July, 2012 Libya’s NTC to handover power to newly-elected assembly' Libya's interim National Transitional Council is set to handover power to a newly-elected assembly, the General National Congress (GNC), almost a year after the ousting of Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi. NTC chief Mustapha Abdul Jalil will pass the reins to the oldest member of the legislative body at a late-night ceremony in the capital, Tripoli. The NTC, which was formed during last year's revolt, will then be dissolved. The change marks the first peaceful transition of power in Libya's modern history. The 200-
en the General National Congress (GNC) by the National Transitional Council (NTC). After more than 40 years of late Muammar Quadhafi's rule, the first peaceful transition of power has sufficed in Libya. "I handover the constitutional prerogatives to the General National Congress, which from now on is the legitimate representative of the Libyan people," NTC chief Mustapha Abdul Jalil said at a late-evening ceremony. According to Tarik Youssef, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, the NTC "has had a pretty patchy record of delivering on the ground of being transparent". The NTC was the political arm of the rebellion that toppled Quadhafi, and officially assumed power after the regime was overthrown. The ceremony was held in an upscale hotel in the Tripoli and all the roads near or leading to the conference were closed to bolster security. The newly empowered GNC is due to begin its work next week. Libya's GNC must now address ongoing violence in the eastern city of Benghazi and in Tripoli where a car exploded during a market place gun battle. "This General National Congress assumes power today while at the same time being expected to act, and act soon... to deal with issues that Libyan people see as essential to the country," Yousef was quoted as saying. Salah Jawooda, an independent member from the eastern city of Benghazi told reporters that assembly members had agreed on the need to select a head of the GNC and two deputy chiefs within a week. The GNC will choose a new interim government to take over from the NTC, and lead the country until fresh elections can be held. A board will also be selected to write the GNC's internal procedural rules. The 200 seat GNC assembly includes 39 members of the liberal coalition of 2011 wartime premier Mahmoud Jibril, 17 members of the Justice and Construction Party launched by Libya's Muslim Brotherhood, and the National Forces Alliance - a centrist party led by Ali Tarhuni, who held several key posts during last year's revolt. Libyans, in their first free election since the uprising, last year which escalated into a civil war that ousted the now-slain dictator, elected a legislative assembly of party and independent representatives.

Endnote:- New Libya parliament elects Mohammed Magarief as head' Libya's newly elected interim assembly has elected former opposition activist Mohammed Magarief as its president on 9th August, 2012, a day after it assumed power. Mr. Mohammed Magarief will lead the assembly in its task of appointing a prime minister and running the country until a constitution is drafted next year. He is considered a moderate Islamist and beat a liberal in the vote. The interim National Transitional Council handed power to the 200-member assembly on Thursday. The NTC, which was formed during last year's revolt that overthrew and killed Muammar Gaddafi, has now been dissolved. Crowds in central Tripoli celebrated after the handover, which was the first peaceful transition of power in Libya's modern history. The new assembly is tasked with electing a prime minister and passing laws until full parliamentary elections can be held under a new constitution. It was elected on 7 July, in
the country’s first free and fair polls in decades and is a mixture of independent candidates and political parties. Out of the 80 seats reserved for parties, the broadly secular National Forces Alliance, led by ex-interim Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril - gained 39 seats, more than any other grouping. Mr Magarief is from Libya’s second city, Benghazi, where the uprising against Gaddafi originated. He spent two decades in exile in the United States. He is thought to be on good terms with the Muslim Brotherhood, the BBC’s Rana Jawad reports from Tripoli. She says his Benghazi roots will placate a lot of fears many in the east had that they would be marginalised by a centralised authority in the capital. The National Front party, which won three seats in the July vote for the assembly, is an offshoot of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya. Established in 1981, it unsuccessfully tried to overthrow Muammar Quadhafi several times. Meantime, Libya’s interior minister quits after Sufi shrine attacks’ on 26th August, 2012’ Libya's interior minister has quit in the wake of a series of attacks on Sufi Muslim shrines and other violence that has rocked the country. Fawzi Abdelali resigned in protest at criticism from Congress over his handling of the violence, an aide said. The latest incidents include attacks on two Sufi shrines that were blamed on ultra-conservative Salafi Islamists. Attacks on shrines of sects have risen since the end of the eight-month civil war that toppled Col Muammar Gaddafi. There has also been a recent double car bombing in Tripoli and clashes between rival tribes in Zlitan.

LIBYA – Timeline Diaries updates and related key notes

7th century BC - Phoenicians settle in Tripolitania in western Libya, which was hitherto populated by Berbers.

6th century BC - Carthage conquers Tripolitania.

4th century BC - Greeks colonise Cyrenaica in the east of the country, which they call Libya.

Capital: Tripoli

Founded by the Phoenicians

645 AD: Conquered by Arab warriors

One of the three ancient cities

Tripoli grew rapidly in the 1970s

Population: 1.7 million (estimate)

74 BC - Romans conquer Libya.

AD 643 - Arabs under Amr Ibn al-As conquer Libya and spread Islam.

16th century - Libya becomes part of the Ottoman Empire, which joins the three provinces of Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan into one regency in Tripoli.

1911-12 - Italy seizes Libya from the Ottomans. Omar al-Mukhtar begins 20-year insurgency against Italian rule.

1920s - Libyan resistance grows as Senussi dynasty joins in alongside the Umar Mukhtar campaign.

1931 - Italy breaks resistance through combination of major armed operations and concentration camps for rebel population. Umar al-Mukhtar is captured and executed.

1934 - Italy unites the provinces as the colony of Libya and steps up Italian migration as part of an eventual plan for the incorporation of Libya into a Greater Italy.
1942 - Allies oust Italians from Libya, which is then divided between the French, who administer Fezzan, and the British, who control Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

1951 - Libya becomes independent under King Idris al-Sanusi.

1956 - Libya grants two American oil companies a concession of some 14 million acres.

1961 - King Idris opens a 104-mile pipeline, which links important oil fields in the interior to the Mediterranean Sea and makes it possible to export Libyan oil for the first time.

September 1969 - King Idris deposed in military coup led by young Captain Muammar Gaddafi, who pursues a pan-Arab agenda by attempting to form mergers with several Arab countries, and introduces state socialism by nationalising most economic activity, including the oil industry.


1971 - National referendum approves proposed Federation of Arab Republics (FAR) comprising Libya, Egypt and Syria. However, the FAR never takes off.

1973 – Captain Muammar Gaddafi declares a "cultural revolution", which includes the formation of "people's committees" in schools, hospitals, universities, workplaces and administrative districts; Libyan forces occupy Aozou Strip in northern Chad.

1977 – Colonel Muammar Gaddafi declares a "people's revolution", changing the country's official name from the Libyan Arab Republic to the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah and setting up "revolutionary committees" - heralding the start of institutionalised chaos, economic decline and general arbitrariness.

1980 - Libyan troops intervene in civil war in northern Chad.

1981 - US shoots down two Libyan aircraft which challenged its warplanes over the Gulf of Sidra, claimed by Libya as its territorial water.

1984 - UK breaks off diplomatic relations with Libya after a British policewoman is shot dead outside the Libyan embassy in London while anti-Gaddafi protests were taking place.

1986 - US bombs Libyan military facilities, residential areas of Tripoli and Benghazi, killing 101 people, and Muammar Gaddafi’s house, killing his adopted daughter. US says raids were in response to alleged Libyan involvement in bombing of Berlin disco frequented by US military personnel.

1988 December - Lockerbie bombing - an airliner is blown up over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, allegedly by Libyan agents.

1989 - Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia form the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

1992 - UN imposes sanctions on Libya in an effort to force it to hand over for trial two of its citizens suspected of involvement in the blowing up of a PanAm airliner over the Scottish town of Lockerbie in December 1988.

1994 - Libya returns the Aozou Strip to Chad as per the ICC ruling.

1995 – Muammar Gaddafi expels some 30,000 Palestinians in protest at the Oslo accords between the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Israel.
1999 - Lockerbie suspects handed over for trial in the Netherlands under Scottish law; UN sanctions suspended; diplomatic relations with UK restored.

September 2000 - Dozens of African immigrants are killed by Libyan mobs in the west of Libya who were said to be angry at the large number of African labourers coming into their country.

January 31, 2001 - Special Scottish court in the Netherlands finds one of the two Libyans accused of the Lockerbie bombing, Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed al-Megrahi, guilty and sentences him to life imprisonment. Megrahi's co-accused, Al-Amin Khalifa Fahimah, is found not guilty and freed.

May 2001 - Libyan troops help to quell a coup attempt against President Ange-Felix Patasse of the Central African Republic.

January 2002 - Libya and the US say they have held talks to mend relations after years of hostility over what the Americans termed Libya's sponsorship of terrorism.

March 14, 2002 - The Libyan man found guilty of the Lockerbie bombing, Abdelbaset Ali Mohammed al-Megrahi, loses his appeal against the conviction and begins a life sentence of at least 20 years.

January 2003 - Libya is elected chairman of the UN Human Rights Commission despite opposition from the US and human rights groups.

August 2003 - Libya signs a deal worth $2.7bn to compensate families of the Lockerbie bombing victims. Libya takes responsibility for the bombing in a letter to the UN Security Council.

September 2003 - UN Security Council votes to lift sanctions over Libya.

December 2003 - Libya says will abandon programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction.


March 2004 - British Prime Minister Tony Blair visits, the first such visit since 1943.

May 2004 - Five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor are sentenced to death having been accused of deliberately infecting some 400 children with HIV infection. They are eventually freed under a deal with the European union.

August 2004 - Libya agrees to pay $35m to compensate victims of the bombing of a Berlin nightclub in 1986.

January 2005 - Libya's first auction of oil and gas exploration licences heralds the return of US energy companies for the first time in more than 20 years.

February 2006 - At least 10 people are killed in clashes with police in Benghazi, part of a wave of international protests by Muslims who are angered by a Danish newspaper's cartoon depictions of the Prophet Muhammad.

May 2006 - The US announces it is restoring full diplomatic ties with Libya.

September 2006 - Human Rights Watch accuses Libya of abusing the human rights of African migrants trying to enter the EU by forcibly repatriating them. Some of the migrants face possible persecution or torture at home, according to the report.

January 2007 - Prime minister announces plan to make redundant 400,000 government workers more than a third of the total workforce - to stimulate the private sector and ease public spending.
January 2008 - Libya takes over one-month rotating presidency of the UN Security Council in a step back to respectability after decades as a pariah of the West.

August 2008 - Libya and US sign agreement committing each side to compensate all victims of bombing attacks on the other’s citizens.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi apologises to Libya for damage inflicted by Italy during the colonial era and signs a five billion dollar investment deal by way of compensation.

September 2008 - US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice makes historic visit - the highest-level US visit to Libya since 1953. Ms Rice says relations between the US and Libya have entered a "new phase".

February 2009 - Gaddafi elected chairman of the African Union by leaders meeting in Ethiopia. Sets out ambition of "United States of Africa" even embracing the Caribbean.

June 2009 - Gaddafi pays first state visit to Italy, Libya’s former colonial ruler and now its main trading partner.

August 2009 - Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi is freed from gaol in Scotland on compassionate grounds and returned to Libya. His release and return to a hero's welcome causes a storm of controversy.

December 2009 - Diplomatic row with Switzerland and European Union after one of Gaddafi’s sons is held in Switzerland on charges of mistreating domestic workers.

January 2010 - Russia agrees to sell Libya weapons in a deal worth $1.8bn. The deal is thought to include fighter jets, tanks and air defence systems.

June 2010 - UN refugee agency UNHCR expelled.

July 2010 - US senators push for inquiry into claims that oil giant BP lobbied for Lockerbie bomber's release.

BP confirms it is about to begin drilling off Libyan coast.

October 2010 - European Union and Libya sign agreement designed to slow illegal migration.

December 2010 - US diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks indicate that Gaddafi threatened to cut trade with Britain if Lockerbie bomber died in prison.

The anti-Muammar Quadhafi uprising

February, 2011 - Arrest of human rights campaigner sparks violent protests in eastern city of Benghazi that rapidly spread to other cities.

Following the recent uprisings, the delirious 42-year dictator of Libya jabbered, “Muammar Quadhafi is the leader of the revolution, I am not a president to step down... This is my country. Muammar is not a president to leave his post, Muammar is leader of the revolution until the end of time.” Simply stated: Muammar Quadhafi is president-for-life! He insists that he will not quit power, and remains in control of the whole Libya.

In first weeks of the uprising authorities use aircraft to attack protestors.

March 11, 2011: NATO AWACs aircraft are now monitoring aerial activity over coastal Libya. NATO warships are arriving as well.
March 17, 2011: The UN authorizes "all necessary means" to prevent the forces of Libyan dictator Muammar Quadhafi from killing Libyans. NATO navies had already been moving ships to the Libyan coast, and more are moving in. Italy has an aircraft carrier in the area and the French nuclear carrier the de Gaulle is on the way. Most warplanes are operating from bases in France, Italy and Britain.

March 19, 2011: The NATO attack on Kaddafi forces in Libya begin as twenty French warplanes (including an AWACs and several aerial tankers.) Two American destroyers and four nuclear subs (one British) launch 110 cruise missiles towards Libyan targets, mainly air defense radars and missile launchers. Some of these attacks take place after midnight, on the 20th.

March 20, 2011: Three American B-2 bombers (flying in from North America) drop concrete penetrating bombs on the fortified aircraft hangers at Libyan airbases. Fifteen U.S. F-15s and F-16s came in from European bases. The U.S. also sent over a dozen aerial refueling and electronic warfare aircraft. The growing NATO fleet offshore was coordinated by a U.S. command ship (designed and equipped for that task.) By the end of the day, NATO believed that Libyan air power and air defenses were largely (but not completely) destroyed. The only anti-aircraft missiles Kaddafi had left were SA-24’s (with a max altitude of 3,500 meters/11,000 feet), Russian models similar to the U.S. Stinger.

March 21, 2011: More NATO warplanes turned their attention to Kaddafi’s ground troops, who are laying siege to Ajdabiya in the east and Misarata in the west and advancing on Benghazi. The Libyan coast is largely devoid of cover for columns of trucks and armored vehicles. Despite infrequent contact with rebels forces below, American electronic monitoring aircraft have been able to identify who was below on the highway, and air attacks now go after the columns of Kaddafi troops outside these three cities. This destroys a large chunk of Kaddafi’s assault troops.

March 22, 2011: A U.S. F-15E fighter-bomber crashes near Benghazi because of equipment failure. Both of the crew bail out safely and are soon picked up by a helicopter from an American carrier off the coast.

Over the last five days, the number NATO air sorties over Libya have increased from under a hundred a day to nearly 200. During that same period, the fraction of sorties flown by U.S. aircraft have come to be the majority. This is a problem in the United States, because continuing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a large budget deficit, means it cannot afford to stay involved for long. So, although the U.S. organized the initial attacks, the Americans want someone else to take over command functions and, soon thereafter, provide most of the ships and aircraft. The other NATO nations, accustomed to having the Americans take the lead, and do most of the work, are unsure of how to proceed.

Quadhafi has time on his side, as the Arab League, after initially backing attacks on him, quickly changed its mind when it saw that this would not be a quick, painless, process. Moreover, most Arab League members are dictators or monarchs, and don't really like the idea of some outsiders (be they the U.S. or the UN), telling them what to do, under the threat of attack. The war may ultimately be decided by logistics. While the naval and air blockade keeps out new weapons for Kaddafi, that is not a problem for him. He has plenty of stuff already. More importantly, he holds hostage the populations of Tripoli and several other cities. NATO has to let through food and medical supplies, even though the Kaddafi troops and civilian supporters will be at the head of the line for this stuff. Unless NATO imposes a road blockade (no traffic between cities at all), Kaddafi can still move troops via sedan, SUV and van. NATO will not put troops into Libya (aside from the handful of special operations commandos already there), and dealing with the Libyan rebels is like herding cats. Kaddafi believes, with some justification, that he can wait out NATO, and work the sympathy angle via media manipulation.
The urban fighting does not benefit much from the NATO air support, mainly because there are few, if any, NATO air controllers down there to call in the extremely precise attacks required in built-up areas. While Kaddafi has thousands of men with military training, and has then formed them into well organized units, the rebels have neither. The rebels are not as united as the Kadaffi forces, and not nearly as effective when attacking (which is always more difficult than defending). Kadafi troops still have some armored vehicles inside cities like Misarata, which are rolled out when thought safe (from attack) to attack rebel positions, or key sites like hospitals. Kadafi has his secret police and street gangs in many cities in towns, who are able to harass the rebels, or even defeat them in some places. Kadafi has cash and lots of promises to give out, and many Libyans with guns will listen.

March 24, 2011: Quadhafi’s ground forces have quickly learned that safety from air attack comes in the form of human shields, or just getting into a residential area and some place to hide from the warplanes. But the U.S. sensors are numerous and effective. That, plus the smart bombs, keep the Quadhafi's forces vulnerable. The most effective defense is human shields, in the form of any local civilians that can be rounded up. Quadhafi's three most effective brigades are holding together under all this attack, but are shrinking each day from the casualties. Quadhafi's troops have, in effect, lost the use of their armored vehicles and artillery. But they can still move safely in the open if they drive civilian vehicles, not in large convoys, and do not communicate on any radio device.

March 25, 2011: A Canadian general has taken command of the NATO Libya force, and taken over control of the operation from the United States. However, U.S. forces tend to handle a disproportionate share of the military activities.

March 26, 2011: The U.S. has sent A-10 ground attack aircraft and AC-130 gunships to operate over Libya.

March 28, 2011: The NATO air effort has turned to Quadhafi's headquarters and munitions storage areas. His fighting forces appear to have disappeared, or gone into hiding. NATO is hoping that many of Quadhafi's troops have deserted, as there have been some reports of desertions.

March 29, 2011: Rebel forces quickly recapture Ajdabiya, Brega and Ras Lanuf, along the coast highway, and head for Kadafi’s birthplace of Sirte. NATO warplanes appear to have either destroyed all Quadhafi's armored vehicles, or forced their crews to flee.

Quadhafi insists that he will not quit, and remains in control of the capital, Tripoli.

March 30, 2011: Quadhafi’s forces, using mostly machine-guns and assault rifles, ambush rebels approaching Sirte, causing a panicked retreat by the untrained and poorly led rebels. This retreat turned into a rout as rebels fled from two towns, as government forces organized an offensive that the no-fly force did not attack. Apparently, no one on the ground expected this move by Quadhafi forces. Apparently there was no coordination between the rebel forces and the NATO air force. This is what NATO leaders insist is, and will continue to be, the case. But behind the scenes, Western military leaders are pointing out that not working directly with the rebel forces will prolong the situation, aid Quadhafi’s and generally do little good. Some NATO political leaders are beginning to change their minds about how to operate in Libya. So far, American aircraft have flown about sixty percent of the sorties, but only about half of the combat sorties. About 55 per-cent of the sorties are for support (reconnaissance, electronic eavesdropping, aerial refueling).

The no-fly force has been averaging 100-150 sorties a day, but demonstrated the ability to fly as many as 300 a day when such a surge is needed. About 700 missiles and smart bombs have been used so far, in addition to about 150 cruise missiles. Qatar has sent six Mirage 2000 fighters to join the UN mandated air patrol over Libya. But the Qatari's are there for propaganda purposes only, The
Qatari jets only patrol and don't fire at anyone. The UAE has also offered twelve warplanes to join this non-violent patrol activity. The U.S., and its allies, are reluctant to put ground forces into Libya, or supply the rebels with weapons. In short, no one wants to get really involved. But at the same time, no one wants Quadhafi to remain in power. But Quadhafi knows that many nations, especially Russia, China and most African states, oppose this effort to remove a hated dictator. Most UN nations are run by absolute rulers who tend to identify with Quadhafi’s plight, not with the rebels announced desire for a representative (or at least more representative) government. The media in these countries is already generating horror stories about imaginary air attacks on Libyan civilians. Given a few actual such attacks, and enough time, the Western and international media will pick up on all this and portray the UN approved air effort as the bad guys.

That’s how it works, and Quadhafi knows it, as do Western leaders: The Quadhafi forces have military experience, better weapons and an incentive to succeed (or die). Thus, they have quickly adapted, by keeping armored vehicles off the coast road and hidden inside built-up areas. Truck have weapons and armed men kept hidden before they move into an area where the NATO surveillance can see them. The only vehicles that go on the coast road have to appear as non-military. This has enabled the government troops to ambush the disorganized rebels as they convoy of largely civilian vehicles came down the coast road to Quadhafi’s hometown of Sirte (375 kilometers from Tripoli). The rebels were then ambushed in several other towns along the highway, and pushed into a state of mass panic. The rebels fled back to Bin Jawad (626 kilometers from Tripoli.) American intel officials saw this coming. It didn’t take a military genius to examine the chatter among Quadhafi forces and not notice the new tactics. But even communicating with the rebels is difficult, and convincing them to act in their own best interest is sometimes impossible. That’s partly because of rebel bravado, and partly due to paranoia about these foreigners manipulating them. The U.S. and Britain are putting some more expert operatives into Libya, men who might be able to convince the rebel leaders more quickly what they must do. There are also more operatives, many of them former military, moving around in small teams to keep up with what the Quadhafi’s forces are doing to avoid detection and attack from the air. These recon teams can call in air strikes, at least American ones. A major advantage Quadhafi has is the inability of the UN and NATO to come right out and say they are going to destroy his government, or even kill him. Most major political figures are coming right out and saying that the NATO massive military effort is all about protecting the Libyan people from Quadhafi, not helping the rebels put Quadhafi out of business. This, of course, is absurd. As long as Quadhafi has his armed followers, the Libyan people are at risk. But Quadhafi knows how to play the game of international politics and media spin. And Quadhafi knows he must win or die. The rebels have other options, and much less focus. Meanwhile, in areas Quadhafi still controls, his secret police have apparently been ordered to hunt down all known rebel supporters, and quietly, and secretly, kill them.

March 31, 2011: The U.S. has admitted that it has CIA operatives inside Libya. But this has been an open secret for over a week. The intel operatives from the United States, and other nations, have found that the rebel movement has a chaotic leadership. A wide range of groups (tribal, political, religious) are represented, and decisions are made in a haphazard way, often when one faction simply gets on the road and takes off (towards or away from the enemy) and, in effect, dares everyone else to follow. Some of the factions represent current and former-Islamic terrorists. You don’t need CIA operatives on the ground to know this. Even before the first bombs fell, American electronic eavesdropping aircraft, and ground based data collection efforts (for Internet and other communications) were scooping up and sorting out the “chatter” being generated from Libya. The rebels were unorganized and unfocused, except for the desire to kill Kaddafi and his minions. But Kaddafi and his henchmen were much better organized and focused.
April 1, 2011: A rebel column was attacked by NATO warplanes after an anti-aircraft gun mounted on one of the rebel vehicles opened fire on a NATO aircraft overhead. The NATO pilot took that as proof that the column below was actually pro-Kaddafi and subject to attack. The anti-aircraft gunner was simply firing into the air to celebrate a recent rebel gain. Firing guns into the air is a common form of celebration throughout the Arab world. Once this was all sorted out, the rebels apologized to NATO and admonished its men to not fire in the air. The rebels avoided a violent split in their fighting forces when a dispute, over which of two military men would be leader of the rebel troops, was settled.

April 4, 2011: Rebels entered the outskirts of the oil port of Brega. U.S. warplanes cease operations over Libya. Support aircraft remain. NATO runs the show, and European nations supply most of the warplanes.

April 6, 2011: Rebels regained control of the oil port of Brega. Kaddafi has been sending representatives to European capitals, to try and work out peace deals. He prefers this to trying to negotiate with the rebels. Kaddafi considers the rebels to be ungrateful wretches, after all the Kaddafi family has done for Libya in the last four decades. Kaddafi is more comfortable dealing with foreign governments, who tend to be more polite than the ungrateful Libyans. Kaddafi troops still have some armored vehicles inside cities like Misarata, which are rolled out when thought safe (from attack) to attack rebel positions, or key sites like hospitals. Kaddafi has his secret police and street gangs in many cities in towns, who are able to harass the rebels, or even defeat them in some places. Kaddafi has cash and lots of promises to give out, and many Libyans with guns listen. The human shields are particularly useful in cities like Misarata, which is 210 kilometers east of Tripoli and has a population of 550,000. This is the third largest city (after 1.1 million Tripoli and 671,000 in Benghazi) in Libya.

Despite its proximity to Tripoli, government forces were never able to take Misarata. However, Misarata has been under siege for more than a month, and that includes many Quadhafi gunmen inside the city. Rebel leaders are now criticizing NATO for not doing enough to help defeat Quadhafi and protect the Libyan people. The U.S. was also criticized for withdrawing its warplanes. NATO is finding its bombing missions more difficult because Quadhafi forces are increasingly using civilians, especially women and children, as human shields for the movement of military vehicles, or to prevent military bases from being bombed. Some rebel leaders insist that the Quadhafi gunmen be attacked, despite the human shields. So far, NATO lawyers won’t go along with that. Rebel efforts to ship oil were halted when warplanes bombed the pipeline that took the oil from the oil fields deep in the desert, to the coastal shipping facilities. Quadhafi said the warplanes were British, but they were probably Libyan. It’s safer for the few remaining Libyan aircraft to fly inland, where the pipelines are, and possibly avoid being spotted by the AWACS (large radar aircraft) and fighter patrols used to enforce the no-fly zone. In Libya, having Special Forces and CIA personnel down there makes it possible to train Libyan rebels, as well as negotiate with the rebel leaders. The problem is that the rebels are divided into many factions, and have only been united (most of the time) the past few months because the Quadhafi forces were close to killing all of them several times.

But with NATO air power, and help organizing more effective military units, the immediate danger is gone. The factional differences will assert themselves. Many Libya experts believe that this is just the first stage of a multi-act civil war. Prospects for a quick and lasting peace are not good. The military ineptitude is a cultural thing. Arabs moving to the West, and joining the military there, perform as well as anyone. But back in the Old Country, putting together an effective fighting force (that needs discipline, lots of dill and training, and leaders who will lead, follow orders and do what has to be done) is very difficult. In Iraq and Afghanistan, it took years to find men who could handle the training and responsibilities. Eventually, combat units, that American troops felt confident to work
with under fire, emerged. But in Libya, the locals and foreigners would like a solution within months, or less. Moreover, NATO is reluctant to put their people on the ground, although that is secretly happening more and more. Several nations have admitted they have intelligence operatives (CIA, MI6, etc) on the ground. However, when the CIA goes into situations like this, each group (usually a pair) of CIA people are accompanied by 6-12 U.S. Army Special Forces, often wearing civilian clothes. The Special Forces often have better local language and cultural knowledge skills than the CIA people (who are sometimes former/retired Special Forces) and operate more as equals than armed escorts. This kind of cooperation has been around since the CIA and Special Forces were both created, after World War II, from the same organization (the OSS, or Office of Strategic Services). The common origin created links that have remained strong ever since. It’s useful for the army, giving the generals an edge when it comes to getting something out of the CIA. Helping the rebels defeat Quadhafi forces, and capture Tripoli, is very difficult. Even by Arab standards, Libyans are terrible soldiers.

Heavily armed Libyan troops were once defeated by Chadian tribesmen riding around in pickup trucks, using light weapons against Libyan armored vehicles. What was most humiliating about this was that the Chadians were not considered Arabs, but sub-Saharan Africans (who are considered even less effective soldiers than Arabs.) But in this case, the Chadians were better organized and better at what they were doing, and sent the surviving Libyan troops fleeing north.

April 7, 2011: The Quadhafi clan have adapted to the presence of NATO air power, and believe that they can survive, and even defeat, the rebels. The initial shock of the uprising has also worn off, and the Quadhafi’s now realize that exile will be difficult (too many countries want to nail them for past crimes), and that the Libyan rebels are not strong enough to take control of the western part of the country, or at least the country’s largest city, Tripoli. However, long term, some kind of deal has to be worked out. That’s because the rebels will gain control of the oil fields and pipelines, and the Quadhafi family has had most of its money declared stolen (from Libya) goods and foreign bank accounts have been frozen. The Quadhafi’s, like tyrants everywhere, kept a lot of cash handy (as much as a few billion dollars worth). That would be sufficient to meet the payroll (for gunmen, torturers, bodyguards, servants and spies) needed to run Tripoli (and 1-2 million loyal, or simply trapped, Libyans) for a year or so. The way this works, the UN can be persuaded to send in humanitarian supplies (food and medicine) to take care of the majority of those in Tripoli, while the needed luxuries (to keep the leadership content) can be smuggled in from Algeria (which is also run by a dictatorship that is unsure of its longevity.) But, long term, Quadhafi needs cash to survive. Helping the rebels defeat Quadhafi forces, and capture Tripoli, is very difficult. Even by Arab standards, Libyans are terrible soldiers. Heavily armed Libyan troops were once defeated by Chadian tribesmen riding around in pickup trucks, using light weapons against Libyan armored vehicles.

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The problem is that the rebels are divided into many factions, and have only been united (most of the time) the past few months because the Kaddafi forces were close to killing all of them several times. But with NATO air power, and help organizing more effective military units, the immediate danger is gone. The factional differences will assert themselves. Many Libya experts believe that this is just the first stage of a multi-act civil war. Prospects for a quick and lasting peace are not good. Rebel efforts to ship oil were halted when warplanes bombed the pipeline that took the oil from the oil fields deep in the desert, to the coastal shipping facilities. Kaddafi said the warplanes were British, but they were probably Libyan. It’s safer for the few remaining Libyan aircraft to fly inland, where the pipelines are, and possibly avoid being spotted by the AWACS (large radar aircraft) and fighter patrols used to enforce the no-fly zone. Rebel leaders are now criticizing NATO for not doing enough to help defeat Kaddafi and protect the Libyan people. The U.S. was also criticized for withdrawing its warplanes. NATO is finding its bombing missions more difficult because Kaddafi forces are increasingly using civilians, especially women and children, as human shields for the movement of military vehicles, or to prevent military bases from being bombed. Some rebel leaders insist that the Kaddafi gunmen be attacked, despite the human shields. So far, NATO lawyers won’t go along with that. The human shields are particularly useful in cities like Misarata, which is 210 kilometers east of Tripoli and has a population of 550,000. This is the third largest city (after 1.1 million Tripoli and 671,000 in Benghazi) in Libya. Despite its proximity to Tripoli, government forces were never able to take Misarata. However, Misarata has been under siege for more than a month, and that includes many Quadhafi gunmen inside the city.

April 9, 2011: A rebel MiG-23 fighter took off from an airbase near Benghazi, but was quickly spotted by the no-fly patrol and approached by NATO fighters and forced to land. There is little, or, more often, no coordination between the rebels and the NATO aircraft. Efforts to establish some kind of air controller system among rebel combat units has been difficult. There is little coordination among the various armed rebel groups. Getting the rebels to organize their combat forces is like herding cats. It can be done, but it’s taking a long time and is frustrating for all concerned. Kaddafi has become more aggressive in his use of human shields and hiding his weapons and troops in residential areas. In this area, U.S. intelligence experience comes in handy, as this sort of thing has been experienced often in Iraq and Afghanistan, and American analysts know most of the tricks, and the most effective countermeasures. Still, some civilians are getting killed, in order to prevent Kaddafi from moving weapons or troops close enough to cause more casualties among rebels or nearby civilians. But the American withdrawal from the lead role in the air campaign has, for the first time, forced the other NATO nations to run the kind of campaign they have long let the Americans, and they vast air power resources, take care of. But the U.S. insists that its forces have been worn down by heavy use in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that Libya is a European and Arab problem, and that those nations, in theory, have the resources to deal with it. While that is true, NATO misses the American experience and leadership in air campaigns. While the United States halted bombing missions in Libya on April 4th, there have been at least three instances since then when American warplanes, as part of their continuing electronic warfare efforts, bombed Libyan air defense systems that seemed to have
survived earlier attacks. It just seemed simpler to have American F-16s follow up on the discovery of these Libyan targets by U.S. electronic warfare aircraft. Kaddafí has his secret police and street gangs in many cities and towns in western Libya, who are able to harass the rebels, or even defeat them in some places. Kaddafí has cash and lots of promises to give out, and many Libyans with guns listen. Kaddafí does not have a lot of supporters inside Libya, but there are still many people who will take the money, and avoid Kaddafí’s killers, and show some support for the dictator. For now, anyway. Kaddafí troops still have some armored vehicles inside cities like Misarata, which are rolled out when thought safe (from attack) to attack rebel positions, or key sites like hospitals. NATO has to assign a lot of its aircraft to monitor the situation around Misarata, and quickly attack any Kaddafí reinforcements approaching the city. There are still rebels active inside Tripoli and in Berber majority areas along the Tunisian border. The rebels in Misarata, a city 210 kilometers east of Tripoli, warn of growing civilian losses from Kaddafí artillery and snipers. Misarata has a population of 550,000 and is the third largest city (after 1.1 million Tripoli and 671,000 in Benghazi) in Libya. Despite its proximity to Tripoli, government forces were never able to take it. However, Misarata has been under siege for two months, and there are many Kaddafí gunmen inside the city. There have been several battles in and outside Misarata in the last week, with about a hundred rebels, government and civilian casualties a day. Kaddafí keeps trying to send more armored vehicles and troops to the city, but most of these are detected and attacked by NATO aircraft. Kaddafí has expressed some willingness to negotiate a ceasefire. But NATO quickly found that many members were very hostile to this sort of thing. There is a lot of consensus on the idea that Kaddafí must go, but not nearly as much agreement on how to make this happen. The Libyan rebels are very much opposed to any ceasefire with Kaddafí. Meanwhile, the Persian Gulf state of Qatar is believed to have already supplied some rebels groups with weapons (portable rocket launchers and Milan anti-tank guided missiles). Qatar (whose ruler founded al Jazeera) has long been aggressive in its foreign policy.

April 15, 2011: Several NATO nations have intel operatives on the ground in Libya, and the information coming back about the rebels is not encouraging. While most Libyans want Kaddafí gone, there is little unity beyond that. There are dozens of armed factions, and no unifying higher command. The good news is that the Islamic radical groups are a small part of the resistance groups. The bad news is that the Islamic radical groups (including some openly allied with al Qaeda) are in play at all. But Islamic radicals were always among those who continually resisted Kaddafí’s tyranny. The worse news is that there is slow progress on rebel formation of a unified military (or political) command. This greatly complicates any efforts to supply weapons or training. Some of the rebel factions are for this, others oppose it. How do you decide who (among the willing groups) gets the weapons and training? Meanwhile, politicians of NATO countries are divided over how much aid to give the rebels. This makes NATO efforts along these lines difficult. NATO is an organization that only acts when there is a lot of consensus. Right now, there is not a lot of consensus within NATO about how far to go in supporting the Libyan rebels. At this point, it looks like individual NATO nations are likely to supply and train the more likely (to be successful) rebel factions. Since no good deeds go unpunished in this area, this support will be followed by accusations of favoritism and unwarranted intervention in Libyan affairs. But the only alternative is a long (perhaps years) of bloody stalemate between Kaddafí and the rebels. That would be accompanied by lots of stories about very bad behavior by Kaddafí’s secret police, and accusations that NATO nations could have done more to aid the rebels.

April 16, 2011: Rebels leaders admit that they are receiving weapons and military equipment from NATO and Arab countries, but won’t provide details (apparently on the advice of the donor nations.)

April 17, 2011: About 160 kilometers south of Benghazi, outside the town of Adjabiya, rebel fighters defeated an attack by pro-Kaddafí gunmen. This is part of a weeks long battle to clear pro-Kaddafí
forces from the eastern oil fields. To the north, rebels forces continue to fight for control of the oil port of Brega.

April 18, 2011: NATO warships fired some more cruise missiles at targets in Kaddafi controlled parts of Libya.

April 19, 2011: After a month of operations, NATO has flown 2,800 sorties over Libya, 43 percent of them combat missions. In these, warplanes have used about 2,000 smart bombs and guided missiles.

April 20, 2011: Britain, France and other NATO countries have agreed to send teams of trainers to help turn rebel fighters into more capable soldiers. The trainers will also work with the senior commanders of the rebel forces, providing professional advice, and liaison with NATO leadership outside the country. Initially, each country will only send 20-30 troops. The U.S. announced that it was sending armed Predator UAVs to operate over Libya.

April 21, 2011: Near the Egyptian border, nine vehicles full of pro-Kaddafi gunmen attacked an oil pumping station 300 kilometers southwest of the port city of Tobruk. One of nine rebels guarding the station survived the attack, escaped and made it to Tobruk. Meanwhile, on the other end of the country, rebels seized the Wazin guard post on the Tunisian border and forced over 150 Libyan soldiers to flee into Tunisia. This border crossing is 200 kilometers south of the main one, that carries most of the traffic between Tripoli and Tunisia. American Predator UAVs have begun operating over Libya, and one fired its first Hellfire missile today (apparently at a government multiple-rocket launcher vehicle.) The U.S. also offered the rebels $25 million worth of protective vests and military radios. Other NATO nations made similar offers.

April 23, 2011: Kuwait gave the rebel Transitional National Council (TNC) $180 million, to pay salaries and other administrative expenses. No one outside Libya is sure of who all the members of the TNC are, or how united (or not) the key people are. There is also a risk that much of the Kuwaiti money will be stolen. Even with a revolution going on, the corruption the region is famous for continues to be a factor. Arab media continues to express dismay that it is Western, not Arab, air power that is assisting the rebels. Arab governments point out that NATO nations have more equipment and experience with modern warfare. But Arab critics point out that Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states have over a thousand modern jet fighters between them, and plenty of smart bombs. Here is an opportunity to use all this stuff, in a good cause. But many Arabs insist that Arab air forces aren't ready, and some even mention what many fear; that Arab pilots will reveal that they really are not ready. Arabs don’t want to risk Iran finding that out.

For the last few weeks, there have been over a hundred dead and wounded a day in Misarata. Until the Libyan army forces began to withdraw, the Misarata rebels were getting increasingly desperate. They even began calling for NATO to send ground troops. This is generally opposed by most of the rebels, and the rebel leadership. Overnight, NATO warplanes bombed Kaddafi’s compound in Tripoli, destroying office spaces and causing dozens of casualties. Kaddafi called it an assassination attempt. NATO estimates that the fighting in Libya has left about 10,000 dead, and over 50,000 wounded so far, most of them civilians. Kaddafi is believed to have 10-15,000 members of his security forces still in action, and about three times as many mercenaries. Most of these gunmen are used to maintain control over the two million people in western Libya. A few thousand troops and mercs are used to
fight the rebels, mainly in and around Misarata. The Kaddafi forces are suffering casualties, and low morale, as a result of the continuing NATO air strikes.

Morale among government fighters is low. They know that the world, and most Libyans, are against them. That’s why Kaddafi depends so much on mercenaries, who take their high pay (thousands of dollars a week) and send it home, hoping to get themselves out of Libya when the end finally comes. While Kaddafi is a proven survivor, he has never had to face this much opposition. But Kaddafi still has options. He controls much of Western Libya, and a third of the population (about two million people). He has some cash on hand (a few hundred million dollars, at least), but his overseas accounts are largely frozen by international sanctions. But Kaddafi knows he can hold the two million people he controls hostage, forcing the UN to allow "humanitarian" aid in. Kaddafi also has control of the western oil fields, but these produce only about a fifth of the nation’s oil. Thus even if he is allowed to sell this oil, all he will end up with is the kind of “food for oil” deal that Saddam Hussein exploited in the 1990s. However, Kaddafi will be faced with an increasingly hostile population in Western Libya as income, and living standards, decline. Moreover, the rebels will probably succeed in halting shipments from the west Libyan oil fields. This would leave Kaddafi’s two million hostages living on UN charity, meaning minimal food, medical and other aid. Thus Kaddafi’s long term prospects are not good, and his most loyal followers have figured this out. The rebels insist that they have forced government troops back from Misarata through hard fighting, not some kind of deal with local tribes. Kaddafi’s men have been taking a beating, especially from the NATO aircraft. But Kaddafi really can’t afford to lose Misarata, because that makes the capital, Tripoli, the next rebel objective.

April 25, 2011: Kaddafi forces have warned the rebels that troops have been withdrawn from Misarata so that pro-Kaddafi tribesmen can come in and kill the rebels, and take control of the city. There are six tribes in the area which, in theory, could muster over 20,000 armed men of the desert (actually, many of them live in Misarata or in the suburbs). But some of these tribes (or large factions of them) are pro-rebel, and others are not united on the idea of some bloody urban warfare for their young men. The tribes (along with everyone else in the region) depend on the port of Misarata for many essential goods, but without cooperation from the NATO warships off the coast, the tribes will not be able to use the port for anything. The government says the rebels have until tomorrow to accept the tribal demands (to get out of Misarata) or face attack by the tribal militias. The rebels are apparently going to call Kaddafi’s bluff.

April 27, 2011: NATO aircraft bombed a factory building, killing twelve rebels. It was another case of poor communications between rebels on the ground and NATO aircraft overhead. The rebels acknowledge that they have to solve the communications problem, and beef up their military leadership in general, if they are to defeat Kaddafi, and keep rebel casualties down. NATO estimates that over 20,000 people may have died in three months of Libyan violence. Most of the dead have been civilians, caught in the crossfire, or deliberately targeted by Kaddafi forces.

April 28, 2011: In the southeast, a column of Kaddafi gunmen seized the town of Kufrah, near the Chad border. In Tripoli, anti-Kaddafi demonstrations were held for the first time in several weeks. While most of Kaddafi’s popular support is in western Libya, many, if not most, Libyans in Kaddafi controlled territory are anti-Kaddafi.

April 29, 2011: On the western border with Tunisia, Kaddafi forces recaptured the Dehiba-Wazin border crossing and pursued the rebels into Tunisia. This led to a brief battle with Tunisian forces. While the rebels have lost the recently captured border crossing post, they are still active in the hill country along the Tunisian border, and the border post has changed hands several times already. Over 30,000 Libyans have fled into Tunisia to get away from the fighting along the border. Pro-
Quadhafi gunmen attacked the rebel held desert town of Jalo, south of Benghazi. At least five people were killed before the attackers fled. The column of vehicles carrying the Kaddafi forces are living off the few towns and villages in the southern desert. Most of these places have no armed rebel presence, and when the Quadhafi gunmen roll in, they can take what they want.

April 30, 2011: NATO aircraft bombed a military headquarters in Tripoli (and the bunker underneath it). Quadhafi forces immediately announced civilian casualties (a Quadhafi son and three grandchildren). NATO later called this a hoax, and that dispute has not yet been resolved. In response to the attack, Quadhafi called out his loyalists to attack and loot the empty embassies of Britain and Italy. These two countries had already withdrawn their diplomats from Libya. In the western, but rebel held, city of Misarata, Quadhafi forces fired artillery at the port, interrupting the unloading of aid ships. NATO and the rebels forces have been having a hard time finding and destroying these artillery weapons (mostly truck mounted rocket launchers). The Quadhafi forces keep them in garages and warehouses outside the city, only bringing them out to fire on the city, particularly the port area. The rockets are unguided, but accurate enough to hit populated areas, and large targets like the port facilities.

May 1, 2011: Growing unrest and lawlessness in Tripoli has persuaded the UN to remove its operations from the city. The UN will keep its staff in Benghazi, and maintain close ties with the rebels. Quadhafi appears to have a manpower shortage, and has been calling for volunteers, to take up arms, from among his civilian supporters. Quadhafi has not got a lot of civilian supporters, so teenagers, and kids as young as 11-12 are being armed and shown how to load and shoot the weapons. When it comes to controlling unarmed civilians, a 14 year old with an AK-47 can be very effective. Quadhafi also has to deal with the growing number of rebel attacks on towns between Misarata and Tripoli. The situation is fluid along the coast road, and, at different times, columns of rebel vehicles head west, and Quadhafi loyalists go east. Quadhafi has apparently ordered his supporters in other parts of the country to go out and "capture" towns and villages not occupied by armed rebels, to help reduce the pressure on Tripoli. Quadhafi keeps calling for a ceasefire, but is vague on its details. Quadhafi has so often lied in the past that he has little credibility now. Thus he is, as always, difficult to negotiate with. Meanwhile, NATO officials insist that their bombing attacks in Tripoli are not an effort to kill Muammar Quadhafi or members of his family. But these attacks do seek to kill the leaders of the Quadhafi forces, and that would be Quadhafi himself and his three sons (and other clan members). So the NATO denials are just for, well, political correctness. It's another way of saying, "we're fighting a war, but we really don't want to hurt anyone, and if we do, we are so sorry." But the trends, over time, will be a declining number of successful attacks by Quadhafi forces, and the increasing ability of the rebels to run their portion (over two-thirds) of Libya, and muster forces to take over the Quadhafi held western Libya. But getting from here to there will be messy. Quadhafi will use the civilians he controls as hostages, to extract food and other aid, and to use as human shields against NATO air power. The rebels will continue to screw up their military operations. Friendly fire casualties from NATO air strikes won’t go away for a while. Quadhafi’s big edge is experience. He remained in power for so long by monopolizing security and government jobs, and only giving this work to loyal associates. Thus the rebels lack experience in many basic security and government administrative tasks. They have to put together a competent government and military command quickly, because the Quadhafi forces are taking advantage of the current rebel disorganization. The thinly populated interior, where the oil fields are, allows small columns of armed Quadhafi supporters to stage raids on isolated oil facilities (especially the pipelines and pumping stations.) Most of the oil field workforce was foreigners, who have fled. Most of the oil field management was Quadhafi loyalists, who have fled. That spotlights another problem. Like most Arab oil states, most of the dirty, or technical, work was done by foreigners, who are largely gone. This
puts a lot of pressure on the few Libyans with the skills, or willingness, to take on the chores the departed foreigners took care of.

May 2, 2011: The war is a stalemate, although long term the Quadhafi forces are likely to lose. But in the meantime Quadhafi has long experience in playing the international media and foreign diplomats in general. Quadhafi has dwindling resources, and his only way out is to either make an amnesty deal (which allows him and his family to retire somewhere with some of their stolen fortune) or to re-conquer the country. Both outcomes are unlikely. Quadhafi has a bloody and well documented history as a tyrant and international troublemaker. So giving him amnesty to get him out of Libya is something a lot of diplomats, and public opinion, would vigorously resist. Defeating the rebels is possible, but only if the rebels screw up in multiple areas (don't get oil shipments going, don't use oil revenue to revive the economy, don't keep tribal and political rivalries in check, don't get their fighting forces trained, equipped and organized). The rebels could fail, and that is Quadhafi’s biggest hope.

May 4, 2011: Qatar and Kuwait have pledged over $600 million in cash to help the rebels get needed suppliers to fight Quadhafi and sustain the civilian population. The rebels say they will run out of cash at the end of the month, and need $2-3 billion immediately to keep their government going. The UN is seeking war crime indictments against Quadhafi and his key aides, using the attacks on civilians as the main evidence. France has announced that it does not want to kill Muammar Quadhafi, just weaken is armed forces and halt the attacks on civilians in Libya.

May 5, 2011: Quadhafi forces are using Chinese made cluster bomb warhead on rockets fired in Misarata. The bomblets are anti-vehicle mines, which descend by parachute and just lie about waiting for a vehicle to run over them. If drivers don’t watch out for these little nasties, they will have wheels blown off, and vehicles wrecked. Quadhafi gathered several hundred tribal elders in Tripoli, as a show of support from the tribes. This was mostly for show. The tribal leadership is being very cautious when it comes to openly supporting Quadhafi. Here is where the NATO air power becomes a major factor. NATO knows where the tribes are, and can bomb assets and cut roads from the air. The tribes want to come out of all this unrest with as little damage as possible, and if that means showing up in Tripoli for a photo-op, so be it.

May 6, 2011: In Misarata, Quadhafi forces set fire to fuel storage tanks, causing a huge, smoky, fire. NATO governments announced that they would seek to transfer Quadhafi’s cash, currently frozen in accounts in foreign banks, to the Libyan rebels. There’s believed to be up to $60 billion worth of this, money stolen from Libya by Quadhafi, his family and cronies. Quadhafi announced that he would fight this, with lawyers, and he will probably be able to delay use of this cash by the rebels (who say they need at least $6 billion a year to run the two-thirds of Libya they control). The U.S. says it will deal with the Quadhafi lawyers, but that remains to be seen.

May 9, 2011: UK Collaborated With Muammar al-Quadhafi On Rendition of Libyan dissidents’

May 9, 2011: The government announced that some rebels had surrendered in Misarata, and some had also "confessed" to their crimes against the Quadhafi government. The rebels denied any surrenders, and later announced they had driven Quadhafi forces out of the city. This is seen as another effort by Quadhafi propagandists to portray the rebels as "evil pawns of Western infidels." Quadhafi wants to try and generate some street level support in the Arab world, because he has angered most Arab leaders over the last few decades. In Misarata, Quadhafi forces moved on the main airport, and this led to a large battle with rebel gunmen. But NATO is making improvements in rebel capabilities every day. Communications systems between NATO aircraft and rebel commanders on the ground have been improvised. The flow of information between NATO and the rebels is
getting more reliable. This increases the accuracy of NATO bombing, and lessens friendly fire casualties among the rebels. NATO trainers and advisors are concentrating on the rebel leadership, improving communications with NATO, and rebel commanders ability to keep in touch with rebel troops. It's not just a matter of using existing radios, but showing the rebels how to use this stuff most effectively. Some Arab countries are being very helpful to the rebels. Kuwait has set up a refugee assistance operation in Tunisia, as thousands of Berber civilians flee Libya each day. Qatar is acting as a broker for oil the rebels can ship out of Libya. Quadhafi is forbidden to sell any oil he can ship. Warships block access to any ports Quadhafi controls.

Columns of armed Quadhafi supporters continue to operate in the southern desert, attacking rebel held towns, especially those containing oil facilities (pumping stations for the pipelines). The rebels have largely managed to keep the raiders out, but have been unable to track down and destroy them. These columns (a dozen or more vehicles full of armed men) are hard to find in the desert, and the NATO air force does not have enough aircraft to watch the desert and hit the targets along the coast, where most of the fighting is taking place.

Time would appear to be on Quadhafi's side, but it isn't. Quadhafi feels that if he can keep the rebels from expanding into western Libya, NATO support will wane (wars become more unpopular the longer they go on). But that support won't disappear quickly enough, as Quadhafi is under siege by NATO air and naval forces in Tripoli. Quadhafi has land access to Algeria (run by a pro-Quadhafi dictatorship) and, far to the south, Niger (which is not as pro-Quadhafi, but is not hostile either). The Algerian access is via desert roads, to the south of the Tunisian (run by anti-Quadhafi rebels) border. Quadhafi has control of Tripoli, and its million residents, but not much else. Even many people in Tripoli are hostile to Quadhafi and there are armed rebels operating in the suburbs. But Quadhafi has thousands of armed and ruthless followers, including many mercenaries who will keep killing as long as they get paid. These, Quadhafi apparently believes, can be used to persuade the rebels to accept a ceasefire. The rebels also have problems policing and supplying the five million or so Libyans they are responsible for. Who wins this war depends a lot on the ability to keep food on the table and the lights on. Too many unhappy civilians makes a peace deal with Quadhafi more likely, and that would lead to the partition of Libya, and the continuation of Quadhafi's power, and appetite for revenge and terrorist mayhem. Everyone wants Quadhafi gone, but Quadhafi and his followers are ruthless and clever survivors. There won't be any easy victories here.

As the old saying goes, "amateurs study tactics, professionals study logistics," the war in Libya will be won by the side that can best deal with obtaining and distributing goods to their civilian populations. Quadhafi, and Tripoli, are cut off by a NATO sea and air blockade. Already, there is growing tension in Tripoli between Quadhafi's supporters (who get more stuff, especially fuel) and everyone else. Quadhafi always had enemies in Tripoli, and the worsening supply situation is creating more. Quadhafi is trying to use shortages to retake Misarata, as his gunmen in the city use rockets, artillery, machine-guns and mines to interfere with the movement of supplies into the port and through the city. This effort is causing growing misery in the city. The NATO aircraft overhead can bomb what they can see, but you can't see everything from way up there. The final battles are fought at ground level.

The reluctance to get involved has left the rebels at a disadvantage on the ground, despite the NATO air support. That's because there are a lot of rebel-held areas in western Libya, some quite close to Quadhafi held Tripoli. It's been difficult for the rebels to supply, reinforce, or even communicate with these many separate rebel groups. Outside Tripoli, in the mountains, Berbers hold out against Quadhafi troops. The Berbers have always been hostile to non-Berber Quadhafi and are currently taking most of the casualties in the battle against Quadhafi. The Berber-held towns of Zintan and
Yafran, southwest of Tripoli, are a messy battlefield, with lots of places for government artillery and rocket launchers to hide. It's a hit-and-run war up in the hills, and the rebels are able to get supplies from nearby Tunisia. But it's a war Quadhafi is winning, at least in terms of the number of rebel fighters and civilians he is killing. NATO has established radio contact with some of the Berber rebels, and is getting reports of where Quadhafi forces, especially their vehicles and ammo, are kept. NATO aircraft have begun hitting those targets. Air strikes on Quadhafi's military headquarters and other bases in Tripoli continue. While NATO insists it is not trying to kill Quadhafi, bombs constantly seem to hit places where Quadhafi has just been.

May 10, 2011: Although NATO countries have said they would support the Libyan rebels, there's been no rush to deliver weapons. Moreover, NATO says that it will only deliver weapons suitable for "self-defense." It's unclear what that means, but the rebels admit that they have not received any weapons yet. Moreover, there are apparently fewer than fifty NATO trainers and advisers actually in Libya. NATO countries are reluctant to be drawn into a ground war, and that means no one wants to send in a lot of trainers, or let them get anywhere near the fighting. NATO media advisors warn that video of NATO troops training Libyan rebels could be used by Quadhafi's propagandists to accuse the West of "invading an Arab state."

May 17, 2011: An increasing number of Quadhafi supporters, of all sorts, are reconsidering their allegiance. In short, there are far more people going over to the rebels than the other way around. The basic situation is that Quadhafi is cut off from the world and being pounded by NATO aircraft, as rebel ground forces keep pressing in. NATO lawyers are talking war crimes trials for Quadhafi, and many of those close to him don't want to be dragged into that. Another incentive to physically get away from Quadhafi is his threat to use his supporters as human shields outside buildings and military bases threatened by NATO air attack. Most Quadhafi supporters are in Tripoli and people there know that the NATO air strikes are very precise and cause few civilian casualties. They know that Quadhafi's Information War campaign to stop the bombing, by deceiving the world into believing that NATO is killing large number of civilians, will fail. The rebels smell victory, and will not agree to a ceasefire or truce. So the defections will continue and increase. And so will the bombing. There is another, less visible, war going on, where NATO (including U.S.) intelligence forces keep track of Quadhafi forces and supporters, to determine which of them will be missed the most, and bomb these key targets. This target selection process has been around since World War II, and has grown more powerful, and effective, as the decades rolled by. But for it to work best, it is done in secret. The decisions are only revealed when the bombs hit, and sometimes not even then (when some less valuable targets are hit to deceive the enemy). The new targets include oil supplies and government buildings. Some Quadhafi forces, that have moved outside Tripoli to escape the bombers, have been hunted down by intelligence collection aircraft and satellites, and bombed wherever they are. For example, the Berbers, living in the mountains to the south (that rise abruptly from the coastal plain that Tripoli sits on), are organized and hostile to Quadhafi. Efforts to control the Berbers have been a growing drain on Quadhafi's military forces. This is important, because the Benghazi based rebels, advancing along the coastal road are getting closer, partly because of Quadhafi forces being distracted by the armed and dangerous Berbers. The rebels have been putting together a new government (currently the TNC, or Transitional National Council), and this includes replacing the pro-Quadhafi civil servants who fled, or were ousted (for bad behavior like corruption or incompetence). But the rebels are a diverse and contentious collection. Some are Islamic radicals who want a religious dictatorship. This scares away foreign nations who might otherwise provide more military and economic aid, as well as diplomatic recognition. The rebels have gotten organized enough to send representatives abroad to try and convince the world that Libya won't turn into another Iran or Afghanistan. But that danger is real, and a lot of Libyans are worried about this as
well. The fighting has, so far, caused 800,000 Libyans (12 per-cent of the population) to flee their homes. Over 90 per-cent of those have fled the country. Libyans are very dependent on imports (paid for with oil revenue). The rebels have emphasized restoring the use of ports. Misarata is handling more ship traffic, despite Quadhafi forces trying to plant naval mines or send in speedboats loaded with explosives. But as long as Quadhafi isn’t getting much economic help, and the rebels are, the rebels are going to win.

May 24, 2011: NATO forces have waged a massive, but largely unreported, intelligence campaign against the Quadhafi forces. Using agents on the ground, and data collecting aircraft, satellites and ships, key information is assembled. This includes the identities of locations, individuals and groups that make the Quadhafi combat forces work. Increasingly, these targets are being bombed, and then hit again if BDA (Bomb Damage Assessment) reveals that total destruction was not achieved. These attacks have increased in frequency and accuracy in the last few days, and are hitting mobiles units as well as bases (especially those containing vehicles, warships or fuel and maintenance facilities).

Since taking over (from the U.S.) on March 31st, NATO controlled aircraft have flown 7,585 sorties (38 percent by armed aircraft sent to attack Quadhafi forces or facilities.) The rest of the sorties were for support, mostly intelligence (collecting information) or logistics (aerial refueling or moving supplies). All this averages over 150 sorties per day. Estimates are that over 20,000 have died so far (in the last three months), most of them civilians killed by Quadhafi forces. Quadhafi secret police still has members secretly operating in rebel held territory. The phone system is still functioning in most of the country, and this enables these agents to get orders from, and report to, their headquarters in Quadhafi-held Tripoli. The rebels are increasingly effective in hunting down these agents, possibly because of Western intelligence collecting and analysis assistance. Quadhafi loyalists monopolized intelligence work for decades, and the rebels have few people with skills in this area. But the rebels are getting better, as they have access to NATO experts, training and communications and intelligence resources. Quadhafi, on the other hand, is seeing his communications under constant attack. Despite proclamations to the contrary, NATO airstrikes are targeting Quadhafi and his key aides. So Quadhafi has to spend more time just finding a safe place to be. Outside supporters are encountering more dissent within the rebel movement. This is fairly common during rebellions, as the government side has forged an alliance to get into power in the first place. The rebels are usually numerous factions and interest groups. These were often purposely kept divided by the government to keep the opposition weak. Uniting, while fighting, is always a difficult process, and has been for thousands of years.

Libya is still exporting oil, but only about 20 percent of what it normally ships. Only the rebels are getting oil out of the country, and are having trouble with UN sanctions interfering with the sale (as the UN lawyers did not draw up sanctions that recognized the possibility of a civil war.) Quadhafi’s oil minister defected about ten days ago, fleeing to Tunisia and reaching out to his contacts in OPEC and the UN. This exposes more of Quadhafi’s overseas assets to detection and seizure. Quadhafi’s effort to portray the fighting as a Western crusade against Islam has been largely dispelled by increasingly vocal rebel support from Moslem states. Turkey has become very active in supporting the rebels and urging Quadhafi to give up. Quiet efforts continue to convince Quadhafi to make a deal, and surrender. Quadhafi wants immunity, which many nations and pressure groups are not willing to allow. Meanwhile, the rebels get closer to Tripoli each day, and shortages of everything increase in Quadhafi held territory. Ultimately, Quadhafi is going to lose. France and Britain are sending attack helicopters, about a dozen from each nation, and apparently to operate off aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships (that look, and operate, like small aircraft carriers). This will enable more accurate attacks to be made, but also imply better communications with rebel fighters on the ground.
The rebellion has split the population, with many Libyans sticking with Quadhafi for purely practical (usually economic) reasons. Quadhafi had created an informant system decades ago, that established Quadhafi loyalists at the lowest levels throughout the country. Many of those paid (not always with cash) informants fled the rebels, or changed sides, but in western Libya, this network of Quadhafi loyalists remained largely intact. In the rest of the country, there are pockets of Quadhafi supporters. Rebels are seeking these government loyalists, as many are killers, as well as informers. Some captured Quadhafi soldiers say they were ordered to rape women as a part of their effort to terrorize the rebels, particularly in the western (but largely rebel-held) city of Misarata. The cell phones of dead and captured Quadhafi soldiers also shows more evidence of widespread rape of women believed connected with the rebels.

May 27, 2011: Russia has withdrawn its support for Quadhafi, the last major power to do so. Quadhafi now has no one in the UN, or any other major diplomatic forum, to defend his interests.

May 30, 2011: The president of South Africa Jacob Zuma, who has long been on good terms with the Libyan leadership, has arrived in Tripoli to help arrange peace talks, to give Quadhafi an opportunity to give up the fight. But Quadhafi said he was only interested in a ceasefire. The bombing, which keeps hitting targets where Quadhafi is believed to be, is something Quadhafi wants to stop. The NTC (National Transitional Council) controls most rebel activities, but its 31 unelected members are under growing pressure to hold elections and restore peacetime conditions to rebel held areas (which is now most of the country). Most NTC members, however, refuse to hold elections as long as Quadhafi is alive, or still in the country. The longer the civil war goes on, the more resistance there is to NTC rule in rebel-controlled areas. The oil fields controlled by the rebels are still not pumping oil. This is because columns of pro-Quadhafi gunmen are still roaming around, threatening to kill any rebel civilians they encounter. This means that rebel oil workers fear to man isolated facilities, especially along the pipelines. There is also a shortage of skilled oil workers, as most of those, as is common in Arab countries, were foreigners, and nearly all foreigners fled once the fighting began. The rebels must bring enough law and order to the oil facilities before foreign workers can be brought back. The legal obstacles to selling rebel controlled oil appear to have been solved. At least one cargo was bought by an American firm. The search for Libyan assets overseas has found over $50 billion so far, most of it in accounts controlled by the Quadhafi family. The rebels have to deal with some legal obstacles before they can take possession of this money. The rebels need cash, because Libya has long run on oil money, and the food and other goods it could buy abroad and import. Westerners have been seen working with rebel fighters in combat areas. The foreigners are giving tactical advice, and apparently directing air strikes by NATO aircraft overhead. This prompt and accurate availability of air support has caused Quadhafi forces to avoid direct combat with the rebels. Instead, the Quadhafi forces use their artillery and tank cannon to fire on rebel-held areas, and small groups of Quadhafi gunmen make raids (riding in civilian vehicles to avoid being identified from the air.) The rebels have sent their own columns of armed men to seek out and destroy the Quadhafi raiders. So far, those encountered appeared to be mostly African mercenaries. NATO aircraft have begun making daytime bombing raids on Tripoli, especially on targets that are symbolic of Quadhafi’s power. An example of this was smart bombs bringing down the guard towers on the walls of the large fortress in the middle of Tripoli. This is where Quadhafi lives, and many of his key aides come to work. Despite defections, Quadhafi’s forces are still formidable. The mercenaries will fight as long as they are paid, and Quadhafi has enough cash to keep that going for months, if not longer. The rebels are still basically civilians with guns. But more of these rebel fighters are getting a few weeks of real military training from Libyan army veterans, and foreign "civilians" (either veterans working as contractors, or special operations troops in civilian clothes). The rebel fighters are gaining more combat experience, and that is producing effective combat leaders as well. But the rebels still face a
long and bloody fight to take Tripoli, unless Quadhafi, or most of his henchmen, can be persuaded to make peace.

May 31, 2011: Increasing numbers (hundreds so far) members of the armed forces are defecting to the rebels. This has included at least five generals. The defectors believe that Quadhafi is doomed in the long run and that most Libyan soldiers are hostile to Quadhafi’s attacks on civilians. The use of mercenaries for a lot of this dirty work has been unpopular among Libyan troops, and helped turn many of Quadhafi’s civilian supporters against him. There are more protests in Tripoli, indicating that Quadhafi is losing popular support in the city that was always his main source of power and trusted personnel. There is also apparently a lot more accurate, and reliable, target information coming from inside Tripoli. A lot more targets inside Tripoli are being hit, and they are nearly all things valuable (in a military or personal sense) to Quadhafi.

June 4, 2011: British and French helicopter gunships have begun hitting targets along the coast. The gunship pilots are more accustomed to dealing with commanders on the ground and, of course, the helicopters can hover. But not for long. The helicopters are operating from carriers offshore and that means they can linger over the battlefield for about half an hour, before returning to refuel and rearm. Fixed wing warplanes can refuel in the air and stick around longer.

June 5, 2011: Rebel forces in the western mountains (inland from Tripoli and its 2.5 million people) have driven pro-Quadhafi forces from these highlands, especially the few towns the Quadhafi forces held. These mountains are largely inhabited by Berbers, the original inhabitants of the region. Berbers don’t like Arabs in general, and Quadhafi in particular.

June 6, 2011: Quadhafi TV broadcasting facilities were bombed and shut down. This had been called for since the beginning of the violence. An official pro-Quadhafi website is still operating. The NATO blockade force off Libya has been ordered to increase restrictions on what ships can enter or leave Quadhafi controlled ports (there are six of them in western Libya). There is an air blockade as well, and Algeria has agreed to join Tunisia and discourage overland smuggling of whatever Quadhafi might want. Egypt (and the Niger, Chad and Sudan to the south) officially forbid aid to Quadhafi, but the smugglers in those nations have huge, unguarded, borders they can cross. These smugglers move truckloads of goods, going more than a thousand kilometers over deserts. So stuff is still getting in, but not a lot of it, and not quickly.

June 7, 2011: NATO launched its largest number of daylight bombing attacks on Tripoli. This caused the streets to empty of traffic and pedestrians, but the only damage was of government and military compounds. The rebels are having a serious, but largely unseen, battle with lawyers and diplomats trying to get access to Libyan government money and other assets. While foreign nations have frozen most of these assets (a lot of it cash), this was done largely to keep Quadhafi from it, not allow the rebels access. The legal procedures needed to get the rebel NTC (National Transitional Council) recognized as the official owner of these assets, takes time. Meanwhile, the rebels are having increasing difficulties covering their costs. Some of these expenses include hiring contractors, most of whom are involved in support functions. British and French firms are supplying most of these personnel. Quadhafi on the other hand, has been caught freeing and arming criminals to fight (not very well) for him. Many of Quadhafi closest aides are defecting. Many of his low level supporters are fleeing as well, especially when Quadhafi is unable to supply food or other necessities. But NATO is concerned about the rebel NTC, and whether it will produce a democracy, another dictatorship, or an extended civil war. The rebels are also rounding up pro-Quadhafi people, and often treating them harshly. In part, this is because these men have been setting off bombs and killing people in rebel territory. There’s not been a lot of this violence, but enough to be noticed, and that has led to more efforts to find Quadhafi supporters. There are also “red lines” in Tripoli, protecting most of the city,
especially neighborhoods known to be anti-Quadhafi. It's believed that NATO is receiving some target information from these neighborhoods. The increased strikes on Quadhafi targets in Tripoli has made anti-Quadhafi forces in Tripoli bolder, and much more optimistic that the dictator will soon be gone. The rebel supporters in Tripoli need all the encouragement they can get, because Quadhafi's secret police have arrested thousands of people, tortured hundreds and apparently executed many of these. This is all an effort to find rebel spies, and discourage anti-Quadhafi demonstrations. But the spies and demonstrators are still at it. Currently, some rebel columns are within 70 kilometers of Tripoli, and the "Battle for Tripoli" is expected to start soon. Quadhafi has been recently talking about "fighting to the death" and "never surrendering." This has encouraged the rebels, as it indicates that even Quadhafi knows the end is near, and that he does not expect to survive it. NATO has established a safety system with rebel troops. In effect, there is a "red line" that, on one side, NATO aircraft will attack any armed men. On the other (rebel) side, they will not. The only exceptions are the few NATO air controllers on the ground, who can identify an enemy target anywhere, and call in a missile or smart bomb attack. Rebel troops are frustrated by the new system, which requires that they constantly call back to Benghazi to report their current position and their next objective. The growing number of rebel units (columns of dozens of vehicles carrying hundreds of fighters and supplies) means that there is not always a NATO warplane available before the rebel unit wants to advance, and move the "red line" west a bit. Once rebel headquarters calls in to confirm that the red line has been moved west, the rebels can attack. If the Quadhafi forces quickly retreat, which often happens, the rebels must halt when they hit the red line. By now, the rebels know that if they cross the red line, a NATO aircraft might show up unexpectedly (perhaps because its primary target in Tripoli was destroyed earlier than expected) and bomb them. The Quadhafi forces, out of necessity, are much more skilled at staying out of sight. So the rebel units halt at the "red line" and complain, but at least there are far fewer friendly fire losses.

June 8, 2011: In the last week, NATO air strikes have concentrated on targets in and around Tripoli. It appears that the NATO goal is to destroy Kaddafi's key assets (communications, weapons and ammo supplies) and, unofficially, kill Kaddafi and his key aides (including his sons). NATO aircraft have flown over 4,000 sorties in the last 12 weeks. At least a fifth of these missions are for collecting visual and electronic information on what Kaddafi forces are up to. The primary, and very unofficial, target is Kaddafi himself. But anyone expressing any degree of control is being identified, located and bombed. This tells Kaddafi that the smart bombs are closing in.

June 14, 2011: Government forces fired five 107mm rockets into Tunisia, causing no damage. Tunisia responded by sending an F-5 jet fighter to fly along the border, along with a military helicopter. NATO has agreed to keep the Libyan campaign going another three months. The first three months end March 18th. More nations are recognizing the NTC (National Transitional Council) at the legitimate government of Libya. Sort of. The NTC controls most rebel activities, but its 31 unelected members are recognized only because it is understood that there will be elections as soon as the pro-Kaddafi forces are defeated. That may take a few more months, or longer. The defection of senior Kaddafi officials has not worked out well. The officials demanded the usual goodies (immunity, money and sanctuary), but refused to publically denounce their old boss. NATO is now inclined to nail them all with prosecution and prison for crimes committed while in Kaddafi's service. Meanwhile, Kaddafi is trying to work out a deal. The rebels are closing in and, from Kaddafi's perspective, the end is near. Cut off by a land, sea and air blockade, and with nearly every nation on the planet against him, Kaddafi can either die fighting, or make the best surrender deal he can. Kaddafi has always been resourceful and unpredictable, so it's unclear what he will do next. In the east, government troops holding parts of Brega, a port for oil shipments in the east (160 kilometers south of Benghazi) refuse to surrender, and killed 21 rebels when they pretended to surrender, then
opened fire. The rebels are quite angry about this. The coast road passes through the dozens cities and large towns that contain over 80 percent of the country's population. Most Libyans live and work along the coastal highway. That's where most of the war is being fought. The war is also being negotiated. As each new town is approached by the rebels, negotiators have to meet with local tribal leaders, to work out how damage to tribal member's property will be avoided and what help, if any, the tribesmen will give the rebels. Many of the west Libyan tribes have long been Kaddafi allies. But Kaddafi was an unreliable patron, and often turned on his tribal clients. So many tribal leaders are willing to negotiate a new deal with the rebels. The offensive along the coast road isn't just one force pushing another along the 1,822 kilometer coastal highway. There are pockets of rebel and government troops all along the highway, although most of the road is controlled by rebels. The government stronghold is in the west, in and around the capitol, Tripoli. Rebels are advancing on Tripoli from the east, west and the south. Off the coast are NATO warships. The mainly Berber rebels are coming from the mountains south of the capital. These rebels have taken the town of Kikla, which is 150 kilometers southwest of Tripoli. Along the coast road, rebels are fighting to take Zlitan, which is 160 kilometers east of Tripoli. But rebels are also fighting in Zawiyah, which is only 40 kilometers west of Tripoli. This town has been fought over for weeks, and the rebels are winning. There is a debate within NATO over whether the bombers should concentrate on getting Kaddafi (a "decapitation" strategy) or provide maximum support for rebel troops. The latter strategy minimizes rebel losses, but the war will continue as long as Kaddafi is alive. But decapitation doesn't always work, because Kaddafi isn't running things all by himself. He has family (especially his sons) and many henchmen. All of these guys are guilty in the eyes of the rebels, and could still keep the fight going. What is most likely to bring rebel victory is the blockade, which stops everything except food and medicine from getting to the population under Kaddafi's control. The fighting interrupts the distribution of these essential supplies, and most Libyans blame Kaddafi for the resulting privation. That anger, more than rebel bullets or NATO bombs, could be the end of Kaddafi. After a three day lull, NATO aircraft are again hitting targets in Tripoli. Despite the NATO nations involved with the Libya operation owning thousands of warplanes, various logistical and support shortages means only about 150 sorties a day can be put over Libya. And only about half of these are bombers. NATO originally planned to deliver 300 sorties a day. They might have done that if the better prepared Americans had stayed, but the U.S. is angry at NATO for coming up short in Afghanistan and always expecting America to come in and do most of the work and handle most of the criticism. While American aircraft are still supplying dozens of sorties a day (most of them aerial refueling to electronic warfare), it's up to the other NATO states to supply the bombers. As more rebels get organized and go to war, they all demand air support. There isn't enough to go around. The United States will eventually get blamed for that, but for the moment, NATO is taking the heat.

June 15, 2011: Government forces have been pushed back from the western city of Misarata (which is 200 kilometers east of Tripoli). Depending on how determined government troops and mercenaries are along the coast road, the rebels could be fighting in Tripoli in a few weeks. As government forces are pushed back from Misarata, they are firing their artillery and rockets at the city while they still can. NATO aircraft are dropping leaflets on government troops holding towns along the coast road between Misarata and Tripoli. The leaflets urge the troops to surrender or flee, otherwise they are likely to be killed by NATO smart bombs or rebel fighters. The rebels have more enthusiasm than skill, but the smart bombs have a scary reputation. The leaflets also mention French and British helicopter gunships. These have been around for about a week, and they are also scary, what with their autocannon and guided missiles.

June 22, 2011: Rebels have turned their attention towards clearing out pro-Kaddafi forces outside of Tripoli. These gunmen are still outside Misarata, holding the eastern city of Sirte and operating in the
desert south. Rebel forces are fighting in Zliten, which is 60 kilometers west of Misarata and 130 kilometers from Tripoli. Berber rebels are holding onto the mountains south of Tripoli, and ready to advance on the city 150 kilometers to the north. NATO air strikes are chewing up the Kaddafi forces coming from Tripoli, across the coastal plain, to the mountains. Depending on how numerous the Berber rebels become, and how weak the Kaddafi forces get, the Berber advance could happen within a week, or more than a month. Dealing with the largely amateur Berber force, it’s hard to make precise plans. In Tripoli, the rebels are organizing and reinforcing their armed followers. These rebels harass Kaddafi forces and provide target information for NATO bombers. Kaddafi’s supporters in Tripoli are numerous enough to organize some demonstrations for the media. But in most neighborhoods, the talk is of when Kaddafi will be gone. Kaddafi is trying to hang on and play world public opinion. Kaddafi apparently seeks to partition Libya, keeping control of Tripoli and the west Libyan oil fields. But the oil is far to the south of Tripoli, and the area is largely inhabited by Berbers, who are hostile to Kaddafi. The Berbers are armed and organized and have chased most Kaddafi gunmen to the edge of the mountains. Kaddafi has ordered his troops to keep the Berbers in the mountains south of Tripoli, and the fighting has been vicious. The Kaddafi forces have been accused of using landmines, and firing rockets on civilians. The rebels and Kaddafi forces are stalemated between Misarata and Tripoli. But each day the Kaddafi forces get weaker (from NATO bombings, declining morale and the NATO blockade), while the rebels, who can export oil and import whatever they want, get stronger. Most importantly, the rebel forces continue to receive more training, and gain experience in combat. The rebel government is having problems with its finances. Partly this is inexperience, partly it is having to build a government from scratch. Some rebel leaders blame NATO, but more observant rebel leaders understand that the problems are internal, and that’s where the solutions will have to come from. NATO and Arab nations have offered financial and economic aid, but with an eye towards insuring that the cash does not disappear into a secret overseas bank account. Those precautions slow things down a bit. So far, there have been about 13,000 air missions flown over Libya, although only about 40 percent were air strikes against Kaddafi forces. The rest were reconnaissance, air refueling and transport. This intense recon operation is necessary to track down Kaddafi forces. These guys have learned to adapt to all that aerial oversight. Recently, for example, rockets were fired into Misarata for the first time in several weeks. This was mainly for harassment, and a way to make it clear that Kaddafi troops could go just about anywhere. But there is a cost, as NATO warplanes destroy dozens of Kaddafi targets daily, some of which are vehicles sneaking around in the night. This sort of thing is dangerous for the rebels, who must keep NATO informed of where the good guys are at all times, otherwise, they will get attacked. For the first time in three months, a NATO aircraft has been lost over Libya.

NATO admitted that it lost contact with a MQ-8 Fire Scout helicopter UAV recently. Back in March, an F-15E had a mechanical problem and crash landed in the desert. The two man crew was quickly picked up by helicopter. While the NATO pilots get combat pay, the losses have been more similar to an extended training mission than to a combat zone. But there is danger. Not all of Kaddafi’s major anti-aircraft missile systems have been accounted for. NATO electronic recon aircraft constantly monitor the area for signs that a Kaddafi air defense radar has gone back into action. These radars would be quickly destroyed in that case, but until the NATO anti-radar missiles hit, aircraft would be at risk. NATO airstrikes are split between aiding rebel forces in contact with Kaddafi troops, and attacking Kaddafi bases (headquarters, vehicle parks, ammo and fuel storage sites). Kaddafi has responded by moving his headquarters, vehicles and military supplies into mosques, hospitals and residential neighborhoods. NATO can still use smart bombs (especially laser guided ones) to hit the military targets without harming civilians. But occasionally the smart bombs miss their targets, and surrounded by human shields, Kaddafi is getting the civilian deaths he seeks. Kaddafi’s media specialists make the most out of the handful of civilian deaths in Tripoli, and distracted foreign media
from the far larger number of civilians killed by Kaddafi forces (via artillery fire into cities and ground fire against civilians). Over 95 percent of the civilian deaths have been caused by Kaddafi’s troops, while NATO bombings so rarely injure civilians that any such incident is big news. Defecting Kaddafi fighters, and those captured, confirm that Kaddafi had ordered terrorism to be used to persuade rebellious populations to give up the fight. The terror attacks included deliberately firing artillery into residential neighborhoods and raping any rebel civilian women encountered.

June 25, 2011: In a major morale boost for the rebels, 17 football (soccer) stars denounced Kaddafi and joined the rebels. This included four members of the national team. Football is a big deal in Libya, and the best players now back the rebels. Kaddafi had long lavished money and other goodies on the star football players, which is why these guys stood by the dictator for so long.

June 27, 2011: The ICC issued arrest warrants for Moamar Kaddafi, his son (Saif al Islam Kaddafi, who has acted as chief-of-staff over the last few months) and intelligence chief Abdullah al Senussi, for war crimes. This makes it difficult to end the fighting by offering Kaddafi safe passage to exile (Venezuela and North Korea might accept him, but getting there could be a problem). While the ICC has arrested, and even tried, some people in its eight years of existence, it has never actually convicted anyone. NATO announced that it would not execute the arrest warrant the ICC (International Criminal Court) had issued for Moamar Kaddafi. The NATO UN mandate is to protect civilians from Kaddafi’s killers, but their unofficial goal is to kill Kaddafi and force his followers to stop fighting.

June 28, 2011: Rebels advanced out of the western mountains onto the plains near the Algerian and Tunisian borders, southwest of Tripoli, and captured a major military base at Ghaaa. This was where Kaddafi stored much of the munitions he had bought over the last four decades. Most of this stuff was too old to safely use. The base had been bombed by NATO aircraft, but the munitions are stored in concrete bunkers, thus limiting the spread of fires and explosions. Lots of useful munitions, and some weapons, were still available. The rebels also captured nearly a hundred vehicles with which to haul the stuff away. There were only about a hundred Kaddafi troops guarding the base, and they fled to another base when the rebels attacked at night. Nearby Kaddafi bases reorganized their nighttime security, and defeated similar rebel attacks. The rebels have a big advantage with NATO airpower. This means several hundred smart bombs or missiles are available each day, to hit Kaddafi forces. This has been going on for over three months, and the pro-Kaddafi fighters and mercenaries will often retreat rather than face the deadly accuracy of the NATO bombs. Kaddafi has handed out over a million weapons (rifles, pistols, machine-guns, mortars and RPGs) to followers in western Libya. Some of those people have switched sides, but there are still many who support Kaddafi (for tribal or economic reasons). In urban areas, these gunmen can leave one neighborhood, to evade NATO bombs, and show up in another within hours. Thus the seemingly endless fighting in western towns like Misarata and Zawiya. It will be the same once the rebels enter Tripoli, the biggest city in the country. The number of Libyan refugees in Tunisian refugee camps is now over 22,000. The number coming across the border has declined as local rebels push Kaddafi troops away from the border.

June 29, 2011: Given the rate at which rebels are pushing back Kaddafi troops, and the effects of the air and sea blockade of Kaddafi controlled western Libya, Kaddafi is not expected to last more than three months. Kaddafi now has a goal. If he can hang on into October, the coalition fighting him might fall apart, enabling some kind of peace deal that would partition the country. But with the embargo and war crimes indictments, that is unlikely. Kaddafi is a fugitive in his own capital, constantly moving to avoid NATO bomb attacks. U.S. and NATO intelligence, using rebel sympathizers, is constantly updating their map of who is where in Tripoli. While military targets have
priority, a suspected Kaddafi sighting will always get at least one smart bomb. NATO military planners keep score of Kaddafi's military strength (which is kept secret, lest it provide useful information to Kaddafi military or intelligence forces), and the trend has been down, more sharply of late. That, plus the difficulty supplying millions of civilians under his control, is why NATO believes Kaddafi won't last another hundred days. It's been about a hundred days since NATO began its military operations in Libya. Meanwhile, the rebels have gotten better on the battlefield, and behind the lines. The rebel coalition is holding together, and each day, rebel fighters gain more combat experience, and more of them come out of NATO training programs. Some NATO troops are on the ground in rebel-held Libya, to conduct training or assist with coordinating the bombing.

July 1, 2011: Moamar Kaddafi has threatened terrorist attacks on Europe. He has carried out such attacks in the past. But now, his reputation and resources are in tatters, and few take his threats seriously.

July 3, 2011: Turkey has stopped criticizing NATO support for the rebels (as a "war on Islam" thing) and backed the rebels themselves. This came about because there was not a lot of popular support for Kaddafi in Turkey, and the other NATO allies were questioning Turkey's continued presence in NATO. Turkey has promised over $200 million in aid for the rebels.

July 4, 2011: In Benghazi, a car bomb was found, and disabled, outside a hotel used by foreign journalists. The vehicle has been in a parking lot for weeks, indicating that those who put it there had fled, or been killed, before they could use it. There had been at least five similar bombs found around the city in the last two months. Kaddafi might still have a few terrorist supporters in Benghazi, and these are being sought. Kaddafi still has loyalists (over ten percent of the population), and several active groups of armed men, all over the country. Some are members of the secret police, some are simply getting paid and others fear retribution if Kaddafi is overthrown. There are even a few true-believers in Kaddafi's version of the "Arab revolution." But mostly there are a lot of armed Kaddafi supporters who fear payback for their barbaric behavior before the rebellion that began in February. The Kaddafi supporters were more savage once the armed rebellion began. Murdering and raping civilians has been a common tactic with Kaddafi forces, and that sort of activity is well known to most Libyans. Many of the rebels want the Kaddafi thugs brought to justice. Some of the thugs are already fleeing, but that is difficult to do as Kaddafi and his killers are surrounded. Kaddafi has been calling in favors from foreign politicians he has lavished money and other favors on in the past. This includes many African governments, and Russia (who has sold Kaddafi billions of dollars in weapons over the decades). Kaddafi has his foreign allies applying pressure on the rebels to accept a peace deal that leaves Kaddafi in Libya and exonerated for all his crimes. The rebels have refused this and, at most, will allow Kaddafi to flee the country. Since Kaddafi is now (since June 27th) under indictment as a war criminal, there are few places he could go. Russia has mentioned a willingness to accept Kaddafi, if NATO will hold its fire as he is flown out. At least this is what the Russians are reporting. Officially, Kaddafi is fighting on and is confident of ultimate victory. After a few days of diplomatic pressure, most African states backed away from supporting Kaddafi. The NATO fleet has eliminated Kaddafi's navy and the coastal waters are safe enough for regular supply shipments, and the movement of personnel. Tripoli, and other western coastal towns held by Kaddafi forces, are still blockaded. Only food and medicine goes in. NATO warships have been ordered to be on the lookout for Iranian attempts to get Iranian weapons and terrorist specialists (Quds force) into Kaddafi held territory. Iran is believed to have promised Kaddafi aid. Inside Tripoli, Kaddafi loyalists try, with increasing difficulty, to suppress open support for the rebels. Despite this, more anti-Kaddafi graffiti appears, and even some small pro-rebel demonstrations. There is also a lot of anger at the growing shortages of everything. Food is getting in, but not much of anything else. Kaddafi still pays wages to the huge civil service, as he still controls the banking system, But there is less and less to buy. The Red Cross can
get around the country with food and medicine, and the Kaddafi thugs have been leaving these convoys alone. NATO runs 150-200 air sorties a day, a third of them bombers or gunships. Most of the rest are recon and intelligence aircraft. The rebel groups are getting better at reporting their positions to NATO, and avoiding friendly fire incidents. There have been fewer of these every month. NATO is playing hide-and-seek with pro-Kaddafi forces. Using a combination of reports from rebels and pro-rebel civilians, plus UAV and satellite photos and electronic eavesdropping, intelligence analysts seek to keep NATO warplanes and helicopter gunships supplied with targets. The Kaddafi forces know that contact with rebels can quickly bring a smart bomb, so this is avoided. Kaddafi forces depend on ambush, artillery (including mortars and rockets) as well as land mines to slow down the rebel advance and inflict casualties. But the rebels get closer and closer to Tripoli. At the current rate of advance, the rebels will be in Tripoli by the end of the month. That will be a big blow to the morale of the pro-Kaddafi forces, and might cause a sharp increase in desertions. Already, more and more government officers and troops are simply giving up, often before rebel fighters even get close.

July 6, 2011: Rebels are now 80 kilometers from Tripoli on the coast road. Berber rebels, advancing out of the mountains south of the city, are a little closer. But there are still active groups of pro-Kaddafi troops in Misarata, 200 kilometers east of Tripoli, and to the south, in the desert. There are pro-Kaddafi terrorists in the rebel capital of Benghazi, over a thousand kilometers east of Tripoli. While the rebels get better organized and professional each week, they are still far from being a professional military force. The rebels are still several separate armed groups, with widely varying (in terms of quality) leadership, and only united in their desire to drive out or kill Kaddafi supporters.

July 8, 2011: Kaddafi has threatened to unleash terrorist attacks on Europe if NATO does not halt operations against him. In response, NATO counter-terror agencies and national police rounded up some of the usual suspects and checked their threat reports. Kaddafi appeared to be just talking, and not actually doing any terrorist activity. Many terrorists who have been hiding in Libya for a long time, are reported to be on the move. But these bad boys appear to be seeking new sanctuary, not fresh targets. In any event, most of these killers are retired, and their former support networks gone or much degraded.

July 10, 2011: Rebels advanced on a town southwest of Tripoli, and cut an oil pipeline providing most of the fuel for Kaddafi forces.

July 11, 2011: An Egyptian court finally agreed to take 14 Libyan TV channels off an Egyptian owned satellite. This cut Kaddafi’s main propaganda outlet. Kaddafi is calling in favors from foreign journalists (who have been bribed, or otherwise treated well over the years) to get certain stories published (usually in Arab or African media, where some are picked up by Western editors). The main thrust is that NATO bombs are killing too many Libyan civilians (over a thousand, compared to over 15,000 by Kaddafi’s armed supporters) and that the rebels are looting captured town and hurting, or even killing, Kaddafi supporters. In the Moslem world, any time you have infidels (non-Moslems) killing the faithful, there’s a media headline that must be used (even if the Moslem victims are supporters of a tyrant). It’s just the way things are in the Islamic world. There are still over a thousand casualties a week, most of them among Kaddafi supporters. The rebels keep advancing, despite an occasional setback. The advance is slower, but it is still an advance. Amidst all this, France is leading an effort to arrange for a peace deal that will send Kaddafi and his family into a safe (prosecution free) exile and get amnesty for his armed followers (to get them to stop fighting). But many of the rebels, including some of the leaders, are insistent on getting revenge for the decades of Kaddafi oppression. So far, the French have not been able to conjure any diplomatic magic to solve this dispute. Another post-war problem, both for the rebels and their foreign supporters, is whether
democracy will take hold. Already, the Berbers are talking about demanding recognition of their cultural identity (which Arabs have been trying to suppress for over a thousand years). Various rebel factions have lists of things they want, to add up to far more than what is available. The war won't be over when Kaddafi is defeated. While Kaddafi supporters, although only a minority of the population, are united and capable, the NTC (National Transitional Council) that leads the rebels is full of dissent and demands for more help (money, weapons, food, and stuff in general). Two generations of Libyans have lived in a welfare state, where most everyone was poor, but kept alive by government subsidized food and other goodies. This is all gone now because the fighting has halted most of the oil exports. Most of the administrators who ran the Kaddafi welfare state have fled, and the rebel replacements are learning on the job. But there is no money and foreign nations are reluctant to send any because of the incompetence and corruption. Over 20 nations have now recognized the NTC as the true government, but far fewer are willing to write checks. Despite this, the rebels know that time is on their side. Kaddafi is blockaded, and short of food (even though that is allowed in), cash (which has been cut off) and fuel (ditto). But letting the fight go to the end would get very ugly. Many Kaddafi supporters would fight to the end (when they are killed, many in family compounds, surrounded by dead and dying kin.) Rebels, who have long suffered under Kaddafi, and recently seen friends and family killed, are not bothered by this ending. But the more media-conscious among the rebel leadership are. And the NATO nations are horrified by the prospect.

July 14, 2011: Berber rebels are advancing from the south of Tripoli, but more slowly because Kaddafi has sent more gunmen to oppose them. Moreover, the Berber rebels suffer the same disorganization, lack of training and general inability to work with the NATO bombers above as their Arab allies advancing along the coast road. The big problem here is not what most people realize, but it is simple. Kaddafi has more effective troops, especially the closer you get to Tripoli. In addition, Kaddafi has no trouble getting determined new recruits. Many individuals, families and tribes that have long been associated with Kaddafi live in and around Tripoli. They know there will be retribution if the rebels win. While the wealthiest Kaddafi supporters can flee (and an increasing number are doing just that) many cannot. So the young men of these families feel obliged to join up, even if they have no military experience. But most of the male Kaddafi supporters and beneficiaries do have military training. That was one of the reasons Kaddafi has stayed in power for over 40 years. If you got economic benefits from Kaddafi, the men in your family were expected to serve at least a few years in the military, if not make a career of it. Kaddafi has many retired military officers he can call back into service, if only to protect their pensions. This loyalty and ability also provides some effective countermeasures against smart bombs and NATO reconnaissance. The Kaddafi loyalists have studied how to deal with hostile air power and the many techniques of deceiving and avoiding those warplanes. This keeps the NATO intel analysts jumping, the rebel fighters stalled and Kaddafi in play. The result is the rebels advance is slower the closer they get to Tripoli. Rebels leaders are discussing some kind of amnesty announcement to take the enthusiasm out of Kaddafi's armed followers.

July 20, 2011: French diplomats are trying to persuade the NTC to accept a peace deal that would allow Kaddafi to surrender, but go "into exile" within Libya. But so many Libyans want Kaddafi dead that this sort of peace deal is considered very unlikely. While Russia refuses to recognize the NTC, it has also made it clear that it will no longer supply weapons to Kaddafi (a good customer for Russian arms since the 1970s). The head of Libya's National Oil Corporation has fled to Italy (because of the violence, not Kaddafi.) While the rebels control most of the oil facilities, they do not have the trained manpower and equipment needed to make repairs and get full (or even much partial) oil production going. Most of the manpower, working in the oil fields, consisted of foreigners (who all fled when the fighting began months ago). Getting any of the foreigners back is complicated by the fact that the
NTC has very little money. By now, most major countries have recognized the NTC, and most Libyan banks have as well. But Kaddafi's lawyers can still delay NTC access to Libyan money held overseas (usually in Kaddafi's name). Once Kaddafi surrenders, and the fighting stops, it would take a few months to get oil production back to a million barrels a day (less than half what Libya used to ship). Government troops holding parts of Brega, a port for oil shipments in the east (160 kilometers south of Benghazi) refuse to surrender. Kaddafi troops have been driven out of most of the city, but left lots of land mines and booby traps behind. This is delaying the rebel occupation of many areas. The rebels don't have much experience or mine clearing equipment to deal with this sort of thing, although they eventually manage to cope (and lose some people in the process). Another complication is that about 200 diehard Kaddafi troops are inside a Brega refinery complex, and the rebels don't want to damage this facility, because it would be very expensive and time consuming to replace, and destruction of it would be bad for rebel morale. So the Kaddafi fighters are being talked to, in an attempt to reach a peace deal. But supplies and NATO trainers are getting through, mainly in the east, but also in the West.

In the Berber held towns of Zintan, southwest of Tripoli, uniformed and trained (marching in formation at least) rebel fighters have been seen. Many more of these uniformed rebels are showing up along the coast road. The uniforms mean the rebel fighters have gone through the few weeks of combat training being offered by NATO trainers and, increasingly, rebels with military experience (more and more of Kaddafi soldiers are defecting). Rebel forces are 80 kilometers east of Tripoli, while Berber groups are about the same distance south of Tripoli. The NTC (National Transitional Council) has tried to represent all rebel factions, but is barely in touch with many Berber factions south of Tripoli. The NTC is more of a shaky coalition than a unified government. This is particularly harmful when it comes to distributing medical and ammunition supplies, as well as basic weapons (assault rifles, pistols, grenades, machine-guns) and radios. Some NATO nations have put some people on the ground to coordinate the distribution of this equipment, and discovered that most factions will not share. Thus many armed factions are difficult to contact, and are constantly running out of ammo and medical supplies. Despite that, the rebels know that time is on their side, not Kaddafi's. Although rebels took the city of Zawiyah in March, they were pushed out a month later and have been fighting a guerilla war there ever since. Zawiyah is only 40 kilometers west of Tripoli (between the capital and the Tunisian border), so close that Kaddafi is unwilling to let it go without a big fight. Kaddafi forces have destroyed much of Zawiyah in expelling the rebels, and during the continuing guerilla fighting. This battle is forcing Kaddafi to keep some his best (and most reliable) troops tied down in Zawiyah, which motivates the rebels there to keep up the violence.

July 21, 2011: Fighting is expected to slow down for a month, starting August 1st, as Ramadan begins. During that month, Moslems are expected to eat or drink nothing during daylight. This is a major restriction for those fighting during the torrid Libyan Summer (which, in itself, is slowing down the pace of combat a bit). As a practical matter, Kaddafi will make a big deal about observing Ramadan, as a way to slow down the rebels. But the rebels are likely to point out that Moslem custom allows soldiers to eat and drink in daylight during Ramadan. Rebels also expect Kaddafi to increase his use of civilians as human shields, the closer rebels get to Tripoli. Using human shields will often stop NATO bombers from hitting Kaddafi troops, and will slow down the rebels as well. While casualties (for both sides) are running at about a hundred a day (dead and wounded), that is expected more than double if the rebels make a pre-Ramadan push in the next ten days. NATO appears to be preparing for a rebel ground offensive, as more explosions are being hear in and around Tripoli. The rebels apparently have a growing informant network inside Tripoli, because Kaddafi forces are being hit even if they are hiding ammo and armored vehicles in civilian facilities.
July 27, 2011: Britain officially recognized the rebels, by establishing formal diplomatic links with the NTC. Similar recognition by the 30 nations (including the United States and most NATO nations) has made it possible to transfer Libyan government funds, in those countries, to the rebels. Sometimes, the money is actually a loan against Libyan government funds held in foreign banks, pending the conclusion of legal proceedings. Either war, the rebels get badly needed cash. There are also shortages in rebel territory. That's because armed Kaddafi supporters are still wandering around the desert area where the oil fields and pipelines are. Although these small groups of men are acting mainly as bandits, they are dangerous enough to scare off the foreign workers who make up the bulk of the technical staff for Libyan oil operations. Meanwhile, the NTC is obtaining more cash and credit with which to buy and import fuel. It will take time to pacify the desert territory containing the oil fields, and to persuade the foreign workers to return. Rebel leaders are split on the subject of amnesty and leniency for Kaddafi and his supporters. Not offering some kind of amnesty simply encourages Kaddafi and his key aides to fight on. But amnesty offends many rebel leaders who have long suffered at the hands of Kaddafi police.

Moreover, Kaddafi continues to behave badly. The latest atrocities involve setting up headquarters and bases for his troops in hospitals and other clearly civilian structures. NATO has warned Kaddafi to stop doing this. Kaddafi ignores these threats. Meanwhile, the pro-amnesty rebels leaders are gaining ground as the war grinds on. Many Libyans are even willing to support Kaddafi going "into exile" inside Libya. Meanwhile, Kaddafi refuses to negotiate directly with the NTC (National Transitional Council). But if the NTC simply announces amnesty or leniency, such direct talks won't be necessary. Many Kaddafi officials have already defected. Meanwhile, Kaddafi needs all the help he can get. Kaddafi only controls is the territory (shrinking daily) around Tripoli, plus a few small areas throughout the country where he has armed supporters who are still fighting. Captured Kaddafi troops continue to report declining morale. NATO electronic intelligence reports frequent desperate calls from Kaddafi commanders complaining about shortages (especially of fuel and ammo) and poor morale. The food, fuel and ammo shortages are common throughout the Tripoli area. While the NATO naval blockade is allowing food imports, ammo and fuel is kept out. The naval blockade is pretty tight, and all fuel and ammo Kaddafi is getting comes in via truck from Tunisia and Algeria. NATO has criticized both nations for that smuggling. Tunisia has increased patrols on its borders, but Algeria (whose government is still on good terms with Kaddafi) has simply pled an inability to close its huge border with Libya. Abdul Fatah Younis was always suspect. He defected from the Kaddafi government (where he had been Interior Minister) last February and was soon appointed military leader of the rebels. Younis called on military personnel to defect to the rebels. But at the time he was reported killed, there were also rumors Younis had been arrested and accused to aiding Kaddafi forces. Kaddafi associates have long hinted at this, which was always dismissed as an attempt to create divisions within the rebel movement. All this could get ugly. Younis belonged to the Obeidi tribe, one of the largest and most powerful in eastern Libya. Some Obeidi tribal leaders are demanding to know exactly what happened.

July 28, 2011: Rebel military commander, General Abdul Fattah Younis was shot dead, along with two of his aides. This happened after Younis was ordered back to Benghazi to discuss the military situation with the rebel leadership. The rebels say that Younis was killed by pro-Kaddafi gunmen. Younis was also reported killed on the 24th, but this proved false, and was mocked by Younis himself. But now he is really dead, and no one is sure why. The NATO air effort has flown some 17,000 sorties since March. Coordination with rebel ground forces gets better every week. This has made it possible for rebel units to quickly call for NATO airstrikes against the occasional attempt by government forces to push the rebels back. This has happened several times in the last week. Meanwhile, NATO
warplanes continue to seek out and destroy Kaddafi ammo dumps and bases in Tripoli and anywhere else they can be found. Thus Kaddafi suffers irreplaceable losses every day.

July 29, 2011: Rebel fighters are advancing from Misarata to Zlitan, along the coast road. Further to the east, rebels are clearing government troops out of the port town of Brega. South of Tripoli are advancing on Bir Ghanam and Garyan. On the Tunisian border, rebels captured the town of Ghazaya, opening up a supply route to Tunisia, and denying one to Kaddafi.

July 30, 2011: NATO bombers attacked transmitters for government TV. NATO and the rebels believe that Kaddafi is using his control of the national TV network to encourage, and communicate with, his supporters.

July 31, 2011: In Benghazi, the NTC discovered that one of the many rebel militias was actually a pro-Kaddafi outfit, waiting for an opportunity to strike. But the true loyalty of this outfit was discovered, and fighting broke out. This led to dozens of casualties, mostly among the pro-Kaddafi gunmen, and nearly a hundred of them were arrested. The pro-Kaddafi group was found to be planning terror bombings in the city.

August 2, 2011: Rebels entered the coastal town of Zlita, but encountered strong resistance. Far to the west, rebels are having similar problems in the city of Brega. Rebel leaders revealed that they have, for some weeks, been holding very unofficial talks with former members of the Kaddafi government. The rebels are negotiating with former senior government officials who have no “blood on their hands” and are seeking to ease the transition once Kaddafi’s gunmen are defeated. The rebels need experienced administrators to get the government, and economy, running again.

August 3, 2011: Off the coast, a British frigate was fired on by government rocket launchers. The inaccurate fire came nowhere close to the ship, which used its 115mm gun to fire back. Elsewhere off the coast, an Italian warship noted a missile or rocket hitting the water some 1,200 meters from the ship. It was unclear where along the coast, the projectile was fired from. In Misarata, a large air transport from the Persian Gulf city-state of Qatar landed, and off-loaded six pickup trucks full of ammunition, which promptly drove off. Qatar, and other Gulf states, has been enthusiastic supporters of the Libyan rebels.

August 6, 2011: South of Tripoli, rebel units left the mountains and moved onto the coastal plain. Two villages, 80 kilometers south of Tripoli, were captured as some 2,000 rebel fighters moved in. One of the rebel units, called the “Tripoli Battalion” is largely composed of men from Tripoli, who got out of the city and joined the rebels. In one day of fighting, these rebel units suffered over fifty casualties (including eight dead). This 2-3 percent casualty rate per day is pretty high by modern standards. This is because the rebels are poorly trained and few are equipped with body armor.

August 7, 2011: Government forces have counterattacked south of Tripoli, where advancing rebels threaten to cut the main road bringing in smuggled supplies from the western borders. This is Kaddafi’s main supply line, since the NATO blockade keeping sea and air supply lines shut down. While all this fighting is going on, the economy is a mess. The NTC says it needs $3.5 billion a year to run a minimal government. Foreign nations are loaning the NTC lots of money, and hoping these funds are not plundered by corrupt officials. As the weeks pass, Kaddafi has more problems in Tripoli, where shortages of fuel and consumer goods cause more unrest. At the same time, the rebel fighters gain more combat experience each day, and Kaddafi’s troops lose more men to casualties and desertion (especially the mercenaries, who sense they are on the losing side, and seek to get out with what they have earned so far). Kaddafi has been reaching out for allies, and not had much luck. Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez has sent words of encouragement, but little else. Someone helped Kaddafi buy a tanker load of petrol (gasoline). But the ship and its 30,000 tons of fuel was
seized before it could reach Tripoli and diverted to a rebel controlled port. One of Kaddafi’s sons announced negotiations with Islamic radical groups (who had long been persecuted by Kaddafi), but nothing came of that. The Kaddafi forces are more mobile, despite the damage from NATO air power, and rebels are still fighting for control of towns and cities along the coastal highway. Rebel fighters have advanced from Misarata to Zlitan, along the coast road. Zlitan is 100 kilometers east of Tripoli, and government forces have fought hard to keep the rebels out. NATO air power gives rebels the edge, causing most of the government casualties and forcing Kaddafi forces to restrict their movement. Many Libyans in the western part of the country are turning against Kaddafi, but these rebels are outnumbered and poorly armed compared to the government forces. The coastal city of Zawiya (population 290,000), 50 kilometers west of Tripoli, has been out-of-control for months. But no one was really in charge, yet. The rebels grow stronger there each week, although the pro-Kaddafi forces are desperate to hold on, knowing that they will lose everything if Kaddafi is defeated. NATO air strikes are more frequently being concentrated for specific operations. These usually involve a rebel effort to take a town of city, or to destroy government forces and resources in Tripoli. Kaddafi has learned to keep moving his armored vehicles and troops around, because the rebel’s informant network in Tripoli is getting more and more effective. NTC efforts to form a unified army have largely failed. Most of the militia groups want to continue as part of a military coalition, not a formal army. This, of course, makes it easier to go from rebellion to civil war, once Kaddafi is defeated. This brought to light a major problem with the NTC, that it is a very loose coalition of anti-Kaddafi groups. Many, if not most, of the rebel gunmen are not out fighting government troops, but have instead taken control of towns, cities and villages all over the country, mainly in the east. The NTC has some control over rebel militia coalitions in major cities and around the key oil facilities. But in many other areas, guys with guns are doing whatever they want. Some of these “rebels” are operating like bandits, taking what they want, “in the name of the revolution.”

August 8, 2011: The July 28 killing of general Abdel Fatah Younis has caused unrest within the rebel coalition. Younis belonged to the Obeidi tribe, which is from the eastern city of Tobruk (150 kilometers from Egypt with a population of 115,000). The Obeidi want to know what really happened with Younis. It’s now been revealed that an arrest warrant for Younis had been signed by members of the NTC (National Transitional Council). The Obeidi want to know if there’s a connection between this arrest warrant and the killing, and who did the shooting. The NTC is blaming a pro-Kaddafi militia in Benghazi, which had been pretending to be rebels.

August 8, 2011: The NTC fired all its government ministers and is searching for new, and more effective, ones.

August 14, 2011: Kaddafi forces fired a SCUD ballistic missile from outside Sirte to rebel held Brega. The missile missed, and landed in the desert outside the town, injuring no one. This was the first time Kaddafi forces had fired one of their hundreds of SCUD missiles. This is not surprising, as the missiles require at least half an hour to get fueled and otherwise prepared for launch. Trained crews are needed to do this, and there’s always the risk that NATO surveillance will stop you before you fire the missile. Libyan Interior Minister Nassr al Mabrouk Abdullah fled to Egypt this day, using his private aircraft, and taking nine family members with him. He arrived on a tourist visa, but Mabrouk is apparently seeking political asylum.

August 15, 2011: Berber led rebels advancing from the mountains south of Tripoli, captured the town of Garyan (population 85,000 and 75 kilometers south of Tripoli). NTC representatives have reopened the Libyan embassy in the United States. Kaddafi has apparently lost his effort to maintain the morale of his combat forces. The daily attacks from NATO aircraft, and the growing competence of the rebel fighters has led most government troops to reconsider their loyalties. Desertions are
more frequent, and the growing number of casualties is a constant reminder of how bad things are. Food and medical supplies can enter Tripoli, so Kaddafi troops have more wounded to contemplate, and less ammo and weapons to fight with. NATO bombers have concentrated on army vehicles and supplies (especially fuel and ammo). Troops still loyal to Kaddafi now have a much harder time moving, and have to watch their ammo expenditure, lest they run out at a critical moment. More rebels speak confidently of capturing Tripoli within a month. There are growing food, energy and consumer goods shortages in Tripoli, especially compared to the rebel capital in the eastern city of Benghazi. There, food is abundant, and much cheaper than in Tripoli. There is no violence or threat of attack. People in Tripoli know all about this, and Kaddafi has to cope with a growing morale problem among his supporters, and the many Tripoli residents who are neutral (a shrinking group), or back the rebels. There are about a million people in Tripoli, and most of them are angry at someone (either Kaddafi or the rebels). After rebels took control of the center of the coastal city of Zawiya (population 290,000, 50 kilometers west of Tripoli) two days ago, government reinforcements arrived and pushed the rebels back to the outskirts. Zawiya controls the road from Tripoli to Tunisia. This is a key supply line for Kaddafi, and the rebels have made it largely unusable. But more cars and small trucks are seen leaving Tripoli and heading west, for Tunisia. These the NATO bombers leave alone, as they are generally full of civilians fleeing, either to Tunisia, or to rebel held territory.

August 16, 2011: The rebel NTC (National Transitional Council) is gaining more recognition overseas, but less at home. The NTC is trying to reorganize itself, in order to avoid a civil war after Kaddafi is defeated. The NTC faces many problems beyond the many tribal, political and religious divisions. For one thing, there has been no party politics in Libya for over 40 years. Lots of inexperienced people seeking power is not a good thing. There has been no free economy either, which can also cause lots of problems. Add to that an expected three years of poverty (as the economy is rebuilt), and you have a recipe for all sorts of trouble. A basic problem here is that the oil industry has been damaged. Currently, only about 100,000 barrels a day are being pumped. Normally, it’s 1.6 million barrels a day, and industry experts believed it will take up to three years to regain that level of production. In the meantime, lots of Libyans will see their standard of living decline, and they won’t be happy about that.

August 17, 2011: Rebel forces have broken out of Misarata, the major city west of Tripoli, and are heading for Tripoli.

August 18, 2011: Numerous large explosions were heard in Tripoli, as NATO smart bombs hit military targets, and buildings being used as headquarters. NATO was apparently getting more and better target information, and it appeared to be timely and accurate. Government troops appear more distressed, and prominent pro-Kaddafi families are fleeing the city. Mercenary troops Kaddafi had hired are also leaving, apparently suspecting that there is little more money to be made fighting for the Libyan dictator. Rebels have entered the main oil shipment port, Zawiya, which is west of Tripoli. With this, rebels have largely isolated Tripoli from resupply, and shortages are rapidly growing in the city of two million (about 30 percent of Libya’s population.) In response, Kaddafi called for an immediate ceasefire and peace negotiations. The rebels ignored this.

August 19, 2011: Heavy fighting led to the capture of Zlitan (160 kilometers east of Tripoli), and Zawiya (30km to the west). Meanwhile, another major Kaddafi supporter, former prime minister Abdessalam Jalloud, fled Tripoli and surrendered to rebels outside the city.

August 20, 2011: Rebels and pro-rebel civilians began fighting government forces inside Tripoli. This was generally successful, forcing government troops back to key locations (military barracks, media centers and so on.) Late in the day, the government controlled cell phone company broadcast a text message to all its customers, urging them to go out and fight the rebels. This had no apparent effect.
August 21, 2011: Rebel convoys entered Tripoli from several directions and were cheered by civilians in most neighborhoods. The rebels had been stalled 30-40 kilometers outside the city, but the soldiers facing them suddenly broke (fleeing or surrendering), allowing the rebels to head right into the city. Most government security forces inside the city fled at the sight of the rebels. But some troops kept fighting, the most lethal being individual snipers. This was apparently all part of a plan developed by NATO and rebels inside and outside the city. All these forces coordinated their efforts to trigger a collapse of government resistance inside the city. A key achievement was the help of pro-rebel officers and troops in the base of the 32nd Brigade, 25 kilometers outside Tripoli. Rebels quickly captured the base, and destroyed the brigade (commanded by one of Kaddafi’s sons). The 32nd Brigade had been very active in killing civilians in Misarata.

August 22, 2011: Tanks and trucks mounting heavy machine-guns came out Kaddafi’s compound and fired on approaching rebel fighters, forcing the rebels to pull back. Kaddafi’s eldest son (chief aide and heir), Seif al Islam, who was reported captured yesterday, appeared in front of foreign journalists, obviously not a prisoner. Mohammed Kaddafi was also reported captured yesterday, but has also apparently escaped. NATO bombers have been hitting about twenty targets a day in the last few days. With the end in sight, people have been more willing to talk about foreign advisors on the ground. There are apparently several hundred of them. In addition to some special operations troops, there are personnel from intelligence agencies, diplomats and civilian contractors. Everyone entered (by land from Egypt or by air from Europe) as civilians, and kept a low profile. Most of the foreigners were in Benghazi, to advise the rebel high command and coordinate economic and military aid. Others were with rebel combat units, helping to control air power and provide some professional military advice. Over the half the air support was non-combat. The most important aspect of this was aerial surveillance of government and rebel forces. Keeping an eye on the government troops was necessary to provide targets for the bombers. Tracking the rebels was essential to prevent rebels from firing on each other and giving the rebel high command an idea of what they had, where it was and what was possible. Rebel commanders have brought over 4,000 fighters into Tripoli so far, including some who sneaked in before the city fell. There are also hundreds of armed, pro-rebel civilians in Tripoli. But there are also thousands of pro-Kaddafi civilians who were armed by the government over the last five months. While many of these guns are being hidden, to be sold later, a lot of them are being used. Many families and neighborhoods are known to be pro-Kaddafi, and to have benefitted by decades of Kaddafi rule. Dealing with surrenders and restoring public order will be a major problem in Tripoli. There are a lot of scared, and armed, Kaddafi supporters here. The more notorious ones (usually the wealthiest as well) are getting out, fleeing to Tunisia, Algeria and beyond.

August 23, 2011: Many Kaddafi backers continue to fight. Rebels driving from Misarata to Tripoli have been fired on by artillery in Zlitan (100 kilometers east of Tripoli). Government forces have fought hard to keep the rebels out of Zlitan, but now rebels control most of it. Kaddafi’s green flag can still be seen flying over several Tripoli neighborhoods, but the rebels seem to control about 90 percent of the city. Kaddafi’s flag still flies in the town of Shaba, south of Tripoli (a stronghold of the Kaddafi tribe) and Sirte (east of Misarata, and another Kaddafi tribe stronghold). About ten percent of the Libyan population benefitted from helping Kaddafi run his dictatorship. Most of these people are wives and children of the men who actually terrorized the population. These guys are generally known, and have a lot of lose if taken alive by the rebels. A lot of Libyans are out for revenge, but many of their targets are heavily armed, and very dangerous when cornered. Deals will have to be made, and many lower ranking Kaddafi thugs will probably get off via an amnesty deal. But several dozen senior officials face prosecution, or worse.
August 24, 2011: The NTC has offered a reward of $1.6 million for the capture (or information leading to it) of Moamar Kaddafi (dead or alive.)

August 25, 2011: NATO fighter bombers made their last large scale bombing in Tripoli, hitting targets in the last neighborhood held by Kaddafi loyalists. Over the next day, rebel troops went in and cleaned the area out.

August 26, 2011: Rebel forces in Tripoli agreed to unify under one command (the NTC). The commander of the government 32nd brigade, Moamar Kaddafi’s bloodthirsty son Khamis, was again reported killed. This time it was by a missile by a British Apache helicopter gunship, some 60 kilometers south of Tripoli. His body was found, identified and buried. Moamar Kaddafi’s wife, three children and several grandchildren have shown up in Algeria seeking asylum. The new rebel government in Libya demanded that these refugees be returned.

August 29, 2011: Rebels are massing forces outside Sirte, the last city that is loyal to the Kaddafis. Sirte (population 100,000) is the controlled by the Kaddafi tribe, but rebels hope to negotiate a surrender. Meanwhile, in Tripoli, rebels are busy searching the many secret compounds and bunkers Kaddafi had built over the decades. They have found much decadence, but no Kaddafis. The U.S. has negotiated a deal that would allow two civilian teams to enter Libya and search for any Kaddafi anti-aircraft weapons (especially portable missiles) that are unaccounted for. The rebels have agreed to secure or destroy anything found. The U.S. is already confident that Kaddafi’s chemical weapons are secure, as well as some other weapons of mass destruction. Rebel forces are finding hundreds of recently killed civilians, many of them apparently rebel fighters who had surrendered. Soldiers and secret police apparently had orders to kill all rebels, including prisoners. Some Kaddafi supporters are still out there killing. Rebels are searching for any artillery or rockets in the hands of Kaddafi loyalists. Some of this stuff is still being fired at roads and rebel held areas. There is still the problem of Kaddafi loyalists wandering around the vast desert interior of Libya. Meanwhile, rebel commanders believe that Kaddafi, two of his sons and some loyal soldiers, are seeking a hideout in the outskirts of Tripoli. Rebel forces are energetically seeking all members of the Kaddafi clan, lest they become a rally point for remaining loyalists. Kaddafi has long cultivated the image of himself as a simple man, who often lived in tents and ate traditional nomad fare (dates and camel milk). Since his government fell, rebels have gotten into many formerly tightly guarded areas, and found that Kaddafi actually lived quite luxuriously, as did members of his family and senior members of the government. Kaddafi simply kept all these gated communities a tightly guarded secret. Now people are wondering what other secrets Kaddafi had. While the European communist nations did not have armed resistance after their dictatorships fell, this is not the case in Arab nations. Unlike Europe, tribalism is still a strong force in most Arab states. Libya is one of them, and Kaddafi’s tribe (the Kaddafi) has been the center of power in Libya since the late 1960s. But there are over a hundred tribes and major clans in the country, and the Kaddafi tribe (an Arab one, centered on Sirte, and thence south into the desert) is one of the smaller ones. This was complicated by the fact that about 60 percent of the population is Berber (mostly) and Tuareg (nomadic Berbers far to the south).

The Berbers have always been hostile to the Arab invaders (represented by Kaddafi and most of the other coastal tribes) for over a thousand years. Kaddafi didn’t trust the Berbers, although he tried to buy off the Tuareg (with mixed success). So Kaddafi’s main supporters are 10-20 percent of the Arab Libyans (less than ten percent of the total population). Many of these Kaddafi supporters are talking tough right now, but few are actually shooting, or planning terror attacks. The rebel leadership is hustling to form a government that will help prevent a guerilla war by those who have lost so much power (political and economic). Everyone knows what happened in Iraq, where the Sunni Arab minority carried out a horrendous terror campaign (mostly against the majority Shia Arabs) in a failed
attempt to regain power and prosperity. What’s important to note here is that GDP helps, but does not guarantee a higher QOL. Indonesia, just below, Libya, had about a third the GDP per capita of Libya, and much less oil. Jamaica had higher QOL, and a GPD per capita similar to Indonesia (as did many other nations, with Costa Rica, with ten percent less GDP per capita, having a QOL rank of 36). Libya was in trouble because it was a dictatorship, with Kaddafi and his cronies running a command (they make all the decisions) economy. This does not work, and causes political and economic complaints that grow worse by decade after decade. This brought about the collapse of the communist states in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s (including the Soviet Union.) This economic and political decline caught up with Libya this year. The rebels still have not taken the city of Sirte (Kaddafi’s birthplace and full of people still loyal to him). Tripoli is still full of Kaddafi loyalists. These people are the ones who Kaddafi favored for decades. Because of the oil income (which accounted for half the GDP) Libya was, on paper, well off. But the reality was otherwise. An international ranking of “quality-of-life” (QOL) listed Libya as 70 out of 111 nations. For comparison purposes, note the ranking from 62nd to 83rd place; Bahrain (62nd place), Lithuania, Jamaica, Morocco, Latvia, Oman, Estonia, United Arab Emirates, Libya, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, India, Paraguay, Jordan, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Albania, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Algeria, Bolivia and Tunisia.

August 30, 2011: The rebel NTC (National Transitional Council) has become the de-facto government of Libya. But the country is actually controlled by dozens of separate rebel groups, each offering varying degrees of cooperation with the NTC. Despite that, the NTC has control of most of the oil, and is getting frozen Kaddafi assets (over $100 billion with). So the various rebel factions are making agreements with the NTC, most on the condition that elections for a new government are held soon. It’s also implied that the NTC will have some success in restoring essential services (power, water, sanitation, transportation, security). This the NTC is hustling to do, and today they convinced the Kaddafi era police force in Tripoli to go back to work.

August 31, 2011: Kaddafi’s son Saif-al-Islam announced that he was mobilizing forces to retake Tripoli. No one believes him and this sort of talk is believed intended more for Kaddafi loyalists who are tempted to flee.

September 3, 2011: Over the past few days, several UN agencies have returned to Tripoli, which again has a functioning police force. Efforts are still underway to restore essential services (electricity, water and sanitation.) The new government is negotiating with European nations to gain control of over $100 billion the Kaddafi clan has stashed overseas, and to hire help in restoring oil shipments.

September 5, 2011: In Niger, to the south, a convoy of several dozen Libyan military vehicles crossed the border. The convoy apparently contained members of Kaddafi’s internal security service, escorted by Tuaregs (nomadic tribes in southern Libya) still loyal to Kaddafi. Rebels captured the headquarters of Libyan intelligence intact. There they found written instructions to destroy all documents if the rebels seemed likely to capture the place. But the Kaddafi supporters fled at the approach of the rebels, and left the paper record of Kaddafi’s 42 year rule intact. It shows a dictator that got sloppy, and an intelligence organization that began to believe its own propaganda, and misread the signs of coming revolution. The documents also show decades of deals made with Russia, China and Western nations, as well as Kaddafi’s neighbors, and his meddling in other African nations. NATO warplanes are still in action, attacking obvious military targets in and around Sirte. In addition to bombs, surrender leaflets are also being dropped. More valuable are NATO air reconnaissance and electronic eavesdropping capabilities. Trying to track down remaining Kaddafi supporters in a country as large as Libya would take years without NATO assistance. Kaddafi loyalists also control Sabha (in the center of western Libya, 800 kilometers from the coast, deep in the
This town of 130,000 was favored by Kaddafi, but still contains many rebel supporters. Kaddafi loyalists still hold the major air base of al Jafra, 600 kilometers south of Sirte. There are still more Kaddafi men driving around the interior, heading for a border and an escape from justice. The rebels don’t want to burn down either town just to get at the armed hard-liners within. But in both towns, the Kaddafi loyalists fear retribution, and the negotiations have made it clear that the rebels are in no mood to discuss any amnesty deals. That’s because over 40,000 people died in six months of fighting, most of them civilians killed by Kaddafi gunmen. Many of these killers are trapped in Sirte and Bani Walid. Sirte is on the coast and is Kaddafis birthplace. Bani Walid is 150 kilometers southeast of Tripoli and most of the inhabitants belong to the Warfala tribe (which accounts for 15 percent of Libya’s population). Kaddafi treated key members of the Warfala tribe well and many of those pro-Warfala men are trapped in Bani Walid. The rebels have the town surrounded, and want to avoid a battle (which would get a lot of Warfala killed and cause a hostile relationship between the new government and the nation’s largest tribe). In Sirte, the Kaddafi tribe is in charge, but is not the majority of the population in Sirte. The Kaddafi tribe is less than two percent of the Libyan population and widely reviled. Moamar Kaddafi has disappeared. He may either be with one of his sons, or in a convoy of vehicles crossing the desert, headed for a border. One son (Seif) is in Sirte, threatening to fight to the death. Another son, Saadi, is trying to negotiate surrender (allegedly with his father’s consent). The other two sons have fled to Algeria, with their sister, and received asylum.

September 6, 2011: Kaddafi loyalists still hold two towns (Bani Walid, population 50,000, and Sirte, population 100,000) near the coast. The rebels have given Kaddafi loyalists until September 10th to surrender. The rebels are hoping that their supporters in these towns can persuade the rebels to give up, or simply change into civilian clothes and flee. The rebels only have names and pictures of a few hundred key Kaddafi supporters, thus most Kaddafi men can just change clothes and make a run for it. The black African mercenaries from the south are having a harder time of it. Rebels have been arresting most black Africans, even though most of them are illegal migrants or legal foreign workers in Libya. Black Africans caught with weapons are usually killed.

September 7, 2011: The NTC has formed special intelligence and combat units to hunt down former dictator Moamar Kaddafi and his senior aides. Kaddafi is believed to still be in Libya. This special force is apparently working with NATO intelligence forces, which have special aircraft monitoring most of the country, and some special operations troops on the ground. The U.S. has warned African nations not to offer Kaddafi sanctuary, as he is being sought by war-crimes investigators and subject to international sanctions.

September 11, 2011: The NTC has moved to Tripoli, and announced that there would soon be elections. No date was given.

September 12, 2011: There was a big explosion at an ammunition storage site near the main airport outside Tripoli. People working at the site report that a lot of the ammo has been stored in the open. Thus the hot sun makes the munitions unstable and liable to detonation. Egypt reports increased seizures of Libyan weapons being smuggled across the border. It’s long been reported that many of the numerous Kaddafi era weapons storage sites were looted. Now Libyan smugglers are trying to get these weapons into neighboring countries (Egypt is the closest) and sell them. There are Islamic radical groups in Egypt (and throughout North Africa) who are willing to pay. Egypt does not want these Libyan weapons on the loose, because there are Islamic radical groups in Egypt who have no problem attacking Egyptian targets. The best customers for these weapons are Hamas, in Gaza. For that reason, Egypt has tightened border security on the Gaza border. But some of this stuff, particularly the portable anti-aircraft missile systems, are going to make it through. In the last week, over 30 senior members of the Kaddafi government have arrived, via several armed convoys, in
Niger. There, the government has not given these refugees any special status, but has not limited their movement. Thus these Kaddafi associates (including one son, Saadi) can move on, and some probably will. Some sub-Saharan African nations have offered Kaddafi and his henchmen refuge. Some senior Kaddafi officials have been captured, and they are generally unapologetic and defiant. During his decades in power, Kaddafi was very good to a minority (10-20 percent) of the population, and many of these people will remain loyal to their benefactor for a long time. The rebels have still not organized many artillery units, and depend on NATO smart bombs (which are much more likely to avoid civilian casualties.) Thus the remaining Kaddafi forces are using civilians (or women and teenage fighters who are not holding weapons) as human shields. This works against NATO, but not so much with the rebels. Now that most of the country is free of fighting, more people can get around and report what they see. Moreover, the rebels are no longer the anointed (by the media) valiant underdogs. Thus you can report nasty things rebel forces did. This is a common pattern, both the style of reporting and the things that are now being reported. While much was always made of how Kaddafi’s forces attacked civilians and basically murdered a lot of people, the media ignored rebels executing most of the Kaddafi fighters they captured. It will eventually be reported that the executions were the result of the rebels not being prepared (as untrained and poorly led as they were) to deal with prisoners. There was also the anger at mercenaries, who were hired in part because these foreigners had fewer problems with killing Libyan civilians. After a few months, stories will appear giving more accurate numbers on actual deaths. Given that the Kaddafi men had more artillery and, for the early months of the rebellion, armed men in action, they killed more people, most of them civilians. Kaddafi’s use of black mercenaries from the south has led to many rebel units going after all black Africans in the country. Blacks have long been looked down upon and discriminated against in Libya (as is common throughout Arab North Africa), and the hostility has increased because of the growing number of illegal migrants from Black Africa, passing through Libya on their way to Europe. Kaddafi still has a satellite TV station in Syria (Arrai television) that broadcasts his messages. Via Arrai, Kaddafi regularly calls for his followers to keep fighting. Recent messages have not been video or audio media of Kaddafi himself, but rather written messages read by political supporters in Syria.

September 13, 2011: Moamar Kaddafi is believed to have a few thousand armed followers left in the country. They are concentrated in Sirte and Qasr bu Hadi. But there are several towns in western Libya that have a few dozen, or a few hundred armed Kaddafi supporters each. In these places, the armed men generally remain hidden, and stay that way because most residents were always Kaddafi supporters. Rebels are rolling into these places and seeking to negotiate long-term peace with the locals. This approach may unravel as the factions in the NTC (National Transitional Council) battle each other. The democratic factions want elections and a free society. Islamic conservative factions, who are a minority, want a religious dictatorship and are willing to fight for it. This could get ugly. There are still Kaddafi loyalists who are willing to grab their hidden weapons and fight again, perhaps even alongside one of the NTC factions. Achieving long-term law and order will not be easy. Rebel fighters expect the fighting in Sirte and Qasr bu Hadi to last another week, at least.

September 15, 2011: Kaddafi’s son Saadi, and three generals who once served Kaddafi, have requested asylum in Niger. The four, and their bodyguards, has driven 1,600 kilometers to reach Niger. Such convoys have been arriving since about a week ago, and continue to. The Niger government has been taking good care of the Kaddafi officials who have shown up, but have not granted asylum to anyone yet.

September 16, 2011: The UN has transferred Libya’s UN seat to the NTC, and lifted most of the sanctions on Libya. This made it easier for the NTC to get control of over $100 billion worth of frozen Libyan assets.
September 19, 2011: NTC fighters captured Sabha, which is 770 kilometers south of Tripoli and astride the main road going to the Niger border. Many NTC backers hoped the overthrow of the dictatorship would be an opportunity to curb the massive corruption that flourished during the Kaddafi era. But anti-corruption efforts are already running into resistance. The crooks are still out there, even within the NTC, and they are eager to steal. The NTC (National Transitional Council) has not been able to form a new government, with the various tribal, religious (Islamic radical) and political factions not able to agree on who gets what ministry. The original coalition fell apart last month in the wake of the murder of the NTC military leader. It’s still unclear what was going on there. Ministries controlling defense, oil and the interior (national police) are most contentious. But all 36 ministries have some political value. Meanwhile, the NTC has a bigger problem with the stalled economy and millions of Libyans without income, or electricity or, in some cases, no clean water. Some of these folks are beginning to hold demonstrations, especially in Tripoli. On the plus side, the oil fields were generally protected (less than 15 percent were damaged) by the oil company employees during six months of violence, and production is expected to increase to 500,000 barrels a day (worth $50 million a day) within a month or so. Kaddafi had ordered the oil fields and facilities destroyed, but the oil field employees delayed and sabotaged the placement of explosives, and the rebels managed to capture (quite by chance) the colonel in charge of destroying the oil fields. The men planting the explosives were thrown into confusion, and never received the order to set off the explosives. Kaddafi is believed to be in Sirte or Bani Walid and is still in touch with his supporters in Libya via a Syrian satellite TV network that continues to broadcast Kaddafi audio or video messages. The French company that provides satellite broadcast services for the Syrian network refuses to cut the Syrians off.

September 20, 2011: Bani Walid, Sirte and several smaller places remain under the control of Kaddafi supporters. Actually, there is a corridor of land, south from the coastal town of Sirte that is pro-Kaddafi. The remaining Kaddafi troops are determined, and more skilled than their NTC opponents. Crushing this last bit of Kaddafi resistance may take weeks, or longer. Sirte is under attack by some 5,000 NTC fighters, and some of the suburbs have already been captured. Several thousand are besieging Bani Walid, and moving on smaller towns in the far south. While the NTC has more gunmen than the Kaddafi forces, and the benefit of NATO air power, the NTC men are not trained for effectively fighting in urban areas. The only military tactics these guys know they picked up from TV shows or movies. As any military trainer will tell you, that kind of tactical knowledge is worse than none at all. So the NTC forces will have to use NATO bombs, or captured artillery, to destroy or demoralize the enemy, or cut off food and water and wait them out. A week of this fighting has caused several hundred NTC casualties.

September 21, 2011: Tunisia arrested Kaddafi’s former prime minister (Al Baghdadi Ali al Mahmoudi), who had fled to Tunisia and hoped to get asylum. Al Mahmoudi was sentenced to six months in jail for entering the country illegally. NATO has extended its Libya operations for another 90 days, and hopes this is enough to finish things off. NATO countries are spending over $5 million a day to support their Libya operations.

September 23, 2011: A French firm revived production on an offshore oil platform. This facility produces about 40,000 barrels a day. That’s worth over $40 million a month to the NTC.

September 24, 2011: NTC gunmen fought their way into the outskirts of Sirte. For the last few days, civilians have been fleeing Sirte, fearing retribution for their decades of enthusiastic support for Kaddafi (which includes joining the secret police and security forces.)

September 25, 2011: At a Tripoli prison, NTC fighters found a mass grave, containing over 1,200 bodies. This confirmed the long rumored massacre of over two thousand prisoners in 1998, as
Kaddafi faced an uprising. That massacre remained a rallying point for anti-Kaddafi Libyans ever since.

September 27, 2011: Outside Bani Walid, senior NTC commander Daou al-Salhine al Jadak was killed by a barrage of rocket fire from the pro-Kaddafi defenders of the town. NTC fighters took dozens of casualties that day, and were repulsed by the town’s defenders.

September 28, 2011: NTC gunmen captured the port area of Sirte. But the pro-Kaddafi forces are holding other parts of the town, and are refusing to surrender. The NTC is having a hard time getting the economy and public services going again. The economy was propped up by oil revenue, and extensive government payments to nearly all Libyans. Oil income has been cut sharply over these last few months, and finding and getting possession of the Kaddafi family billions has taken time. So, at this point, people are going hungry and losing access to medical care and basic services like electricity and clean water. There is also a problem with the thousands of NTC gunmen who came to Tripoli, and are just hanging out, taking whatever they need. The NTC also has a problem with the dozens of militias that comprise their armed forces. The commanders of these militias do not always obey orders, or simply see an order as something to be debated. There is still no agreement about who is going to run Libya, and how. Already, Islamic conservative groups are demanding religious lifestyle restrictions, which most Libyans oppose. The Islamic conservatives have to be careful, since most Libyan men (and many women) now have firearms and are determined to not be bossed around anymore. Actually, Kaddafi spread the money around during his decades of rule. But if he could not buy your obedience, he would use force, and it’s the secret police, and other security forces, that became so hated. Anyone who worked for these outfits, or is related to someone who did, is in danger these days. In many parts of the country, the NTC victory has ugly side-effects. Areas known to be pro-Kaddafi (especially if they benefitted economically) are subject to looting or worse (rapes have occurred). As a result, many Kaddafi supporters have fled their homes, creating another wave of refugees. Thus as anti-Kaddafi refugees leave camps in adjacent countries, they are replaced by pro-Kaddafi refugees. Kaddafi spent over $100 billion on weapons during his decades of rule, and much of this stuff is simply being carted away by NTC men, or anyone that can get to it.

For the NTC, many of the weapons are distributed to new recruits. But for most people, the weapons are loot, to be sold or, if you are a criminal, or someone living in a rough neighborhood, kept for later use. Smugglers are buying a lot of this stuff, and moving it out of the country. For the last few months, the U.S. has had small (but growing recently) teams of weapons experts helping to find, identify and secure the most dangerous of these weapons (mainly chemical weapons and portable anti-aircraft missiles). Egypt has been making a major effort to catch the smugglers, because one of the most lucrative markets for these buyers is among the many Islamic radical groups based in Gaza. Moammar Kaddafi has disappeared, and is believed to have taken refuge with one of the Tuareg tribes living along the Algerian border. Kaddafi has long treated the Tuareg well, and those who benefitted are obliged by tribal tradition to provide refuge for their patron. Kaddafi is still getting messages out via the Internet, urging resistance to the NTC to continue. NTC fighters are increasingly heading for the southern desert, to hunt down Kaddafi forces there. Kaddafi gunmen are believed to still hold some small towns in the south, but no one is sure. Communications are difficult, and it’s all very wild west/outback down there. The NTC has brought up tanks and artillery for the battles of Bani Walid and Sirte. But these have not been decisive and NTC has called on NATO warplanes to break the resistance. NATO aircraft are still flying about a hundred sorties a day, but only about half of them can be used against the two towns. The rest are for support (mostly refueling and intelligence). The NTC forces are still basically an armed rabble, that cannot stand up to determined resistance. On the coast, Kaddafi hometown Sirte (population 100,000, 360 kilometers east of Tripoli) has been the scene of even more intense fighting. One of Kaddafi’s sons, Mutassim, commands the defenders in
Sirte, which is considered the center of the remaining resistance. NTC forces have fought their way into Sirte, but the defenders keep fighting. The Kaddafi tribe runs Sirte, but is not the majority there. The Kaddafi tribe is less than two percent of the Libyan population and widely reviled. Once Sirte and Bani Walid fall, Kaddafi’s supporters will simply be scattered groups of armed criminals, to be hunted down and killed or captured.

September 29, 2011: NTC fighters have been stalled outside Bani Walid (population 50,000, 170 kilometers southeast of Tripoli) for most of the month. This town is dominated by the Warfala tribe (which accounts for 15 percent of Libya’s population). Kaddafi treated key members of the Warfala tribe well and many of those pro-Warfala men are trapped in Bani Walid. The NTC tried to avoid a battle for the town, but that failed. Now a lot of Warfala are getting killed and this will cause a hostile relationship between the new government and the nation’s largest tribe. One of Kaddafi’s sons, Seif al Islam, commands the defenders in Bani Walid.

September 30, 2011: The NTC brokered a truce and prisoner exchange at an oasis some 600 km (370 miles) southwest of Tripoli. Here, pro-Kaddafi Tuareg and pro-NTC Arabs have been skirmishing.

October 2, 2011: After being warned by the NTC about the coming attack, over a thousand civilians fled Sirte. In the last few weeks, over 10,000 people have fled Sirte. The pro-Kaddafi forces are believed to have 5,000 armed men in the city. The pro-Kaddafi forces are being cleared out of Bani Walid, and expect to capture it shortly. Kaddafi spent over $100 billion on weapons during his decades of rule, and much of this stuff is simply being carted away by NTC men, or anyone that can get to it. Criminal gangs have been trying to smuggle these weapons out of the country, with mixed success. Egypt has been making a major effort to catch the smugglers, because one of the most lucrative markets for these buyers is among the many Islamic radical groups based in Gaza. So now the Libyan arms are showing up in Sudan, where Darfur (western Sudan) rebels are working with Libyan smugglers to get the weapons into Sudan. In response to the chaos in Tripoli, a former Islamic radical leader (Abdullah Ahmed Naker) announced that he had formed the Tripoli Revolutionists Council, backed by 73 militias and over 20,000 gunmen. This new force would police the city and impose law and order. It is unclear how much of that announcement is puffery, and how much is real. The lack of discipline among NTC gunmen could be seen in the outskirts of Sirte, where homes of Kaddafi supporters were spontaneously looted, despite calls from some pro-NTC militia leaders to not do so. Even in Tripoli, there are hundreds of armed men, from one militia or another, who roam the city, setting up checkpoints, firing their weapons in
the air and indulging in some light looting. Intimidated locals often just give the gunmen stuff, or do not present a bill, in the hope that these guys will move on.

October 7, 2011: NTC (National Transitional Council) fighters began yet another attempt to take the coastal town of Sirte (population 100,000, 360 kilometers east of Tripoli). This is Kaddafi’s birthplace and the home of many of his core supporters (including many members of the Kaddafi tribe). One of Kaddafi’s sons, Mutassim, commands the defenders in Sirte, which is considered the center of the remaining resistance. Thus the NTC has announced that the new government will not be formed until Sirte is conquered. This is not a well thought out policy (although it was presented as such), but a practical move by an NTC that isn’t in charge and lurching towards a second round of civil war. In this conflict, the various anti-Kaddafi factions will battle it out to see who the new Libyan dictator will be. Moammar Kaddafi, hiding out somewhere in Libya, is calling for his supporters to get ready for the next round of fighting, and the possibility of the Kaddafis regaining power, or at least a place at the table.

October 10, 2011: The NTC has recognized their Syrian counterpart (the Syrian National Council, or SNC). Many UN members (especially non-democracies) opposed the NATO bombing campaign in Libya, and don’t want the same sort of thing to happen in Syria. Such a trend would threaten the leaders of the many non-democracies on the planet. China is still a communist police state. Russia, while officially a democracy, has turned into an oligarchy run by former members of the KGB (secret police). Neither of these countries wants democracy to spread. Many countries have still not recognized the NTC as the rulers of Libya. In Sirte, NTC gunmen seized key sites (like the university and some commercial areas) and Kaddafi supporters retreated towards residential neighborhoods where they kept their families.

October 12, 2011: The NTC announced the capture of Kaddafi son Mutassim in Sirte. But there has been no confirmation, and by Friday, some NTC brigade leaders in Sirte said a few of Mutassim’s bodyguards were captured, but not Mutassim himself. Today, NTC fighters spread into most parts of Sirte, using truck mounted anti-aircraft guns to kill or drive away snipers operating from buildings. Islamic conservative groups have damaged Sufi shrines in Tripoli. The Sufi, like the Shia (and many similar groups) are minority Islamic sects that conservative factions among the majority Sunni consider heretical. This often leads to violence, as it has for decades in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Al Qaeda, and similar groups, are particularly active in going after "heretical" Moslems. The heretics often fight back, and most Moslems do not back the radicals. The NTC is trying to avoid a battle between Islamic radicals and the rest of the population, lest Libya suffer what Iraq, Pakistan and Iran are going through. The problem is that the Islamic radicals can often obtain enough popular support to sustain the Islamic terrorists for months or years of violence. Egypt revealed that it had recently captured men from five different smuggling gangs, who were bringing in weapons from Libya and trying to get them into Gaza (where Hamas, and other terrorists, will pay the best price.) Kaddafi had millions of small, and very portable weapons (assault rifles, machine-guns, mortars and anti-aircraft missiles) in warehouses (usually in military bases) that lost their security over the last few months and were plundered. These weapons will end up being sold throughout North Africa and to the south, causing an increase in violence and deaths. The U.S. has sent in dozens of civilian (but former military) arms experts, to track the weapons, get an accurate count of how many there are and seek ways to regain control of them (by persuasion, purchase or force.) The NTC is still having a lot of trouble organizing a government. There are several problems. For one thing, Libya has never had a democracy, so this form of government is largely foreign to Libyans. They have heard of it, but never done it. Second, Libya is an artificial country. For thousands of years it was three or more separate entities. Unification came, via Italian colonial administrators, a century ago. That lasted until 1947, followed by two decades of monarchy, then Kaddafi’s dictatorship. Kaddafi himself is believed to be
hiding in the mountains and desert in the south, with the aid of Tuareg tribes that had long benefitted from Kaddafi generosity. Kaddafi considered himself a "man of the desert" (he actually was not, his family and tribe lived along the coast) and supported the Tuareg because they were religiously and socially conservative and were quick to rebel against authority. Kaddafi encouraged such rebellious behavior among Tuareg tribes in neighboring countries. Kaddafi loved to stir things up, except in his own country. Despite all this, there is a Tuareg faction in the NTC. The other major Kaddafi stronghold is Bani Walid (a town of 50,000, some 150 kilometers southeast of Tripoli). Here, the NTC fighters are proceeding more slowly. The capture of Sirte (population 100,000, 360 kilometers east of Tripoli) is seen as the key to "defeating Kaddafi." Once Sirte falls, defeating other pro-Kaddafi groups is seen as mopping up. Maybe, maybe not.

October 14, 2011: In Sirte (Kaddafi's birthplace), NTC gunmen retreated two kilometers from two residential neighborhoods in the northwest part of the city. These areas are held by several hundred determined Kaddafi soldiers who launched a counterattack. The NTC men had not bombed and shelled these two neighborhoods because of the civilians believed to be there. But now these residential areas will be reduced to rubble, like most of Sirte. NTC hopes to crush the Sirte resistance within a week, but many hardcore Kaddafi supporters believe they must fight or die. Some captured Kaddafi supporters have been tortured or executed, and this makes the remaining Kaddafi gunmen reluctant to give up.

HISTORY: The last of Muammar Al-Quadhafi's Address to Libyans'

In the name of Allah, the ...beneficent, the merciful...

For 40 years, or was it longer, I can't remember, I did all I could to give people houses, hospitals, schools, and when they were hungry, I gave them food. I even made Benghazi into farmland from the desert, I stood up to attacks from that cowboy Ronald Reagan, when he killed my adopted orphaned daughter, he was trying to kill me, instead he killed that poor innocent child. Then I helped my brothers and sisters from Africa with money for the African Union.

I did all I could to help people Understand the concept of real democracy, where people's committees ran our country. But that was never enough, as some told me, even people who had 10 room homes, new suits and furniture, were never satisfied, as selfish as they were they wanted more. They told Americans and other visitors, that they needed "democracy" and "freedom" never realizing it was a cut throat system, where the biggest dog eats the rest, but they were enchanted with those words, never realizing that in America, there was no free medicine, no free hospitals, no free housing, no free education and no free food, except when people had to beg or go to long lines to get soup.

No, no matter what I did, it was never enough for some, but for others, they knew I was the son of Gamal Abdel Nasser, the only true Arab and Muslim leader we've had since Salah-al-Deen, when he claimed the Suez Canal for his people, as I claimed Libya, for my people, it was his footsteps I tried to follow, to keep my people free from colonial domination - from thieves who would steal from us.

Now, I am under attack by the biggest force in military history, my little African son, Obama wants to kill me, to take away the freedom of our country, to take away our free housing, our free medicine, our free education, our free food, and replace it with American style thievery, called "capitalism", but all of us in the Third World know what that means, it means corporations run the countries, run the world, and the people suffer.
So, there is no alternative for me, I must make my stand, and if Allah wishes, I shall die by following His path, the path that has made our country rich with farmland, with food and health, and even allowed us to help our African and Arab brothers and sisters.

I do not wish to die, but if it comes to that, to save this land, my people, all the thousands who are all my children, then so be it.

Let this testament be my voice to the world, that I stood up to crusader attacks of NATO, stood up to cruelty, stoop up to betrayal, stood up to the West and its colonialist ambitions, and that I stood with my African brothers, my true Arab and Muslim brothers, as a beacon of light.

When others were building castles, I lived in a modest house, and in a tent. I never forgot my youth in Sirte, I did not spend our national treasury foolishly, and like Salah-al-Deen, our great Muslim leader, who rescued Jerusalem for Islam, I took little for myself...

In the West, some have called me "mad", "crazy", but they know the truth yet continue to lie, they know that our land is independent and free, not in the colonial grip, that my vision, my path, is, and has been clear and for my people and that I will fight to my last breath to keep us free, may Allah almighty help us to remain faithful and free. -Mu'ummar Al- Quadhafi. May Allah 4give and grant you with Jannatul firdaus. Ameeen

October 14, 2011: In Tripoli, a few dozen Kaddafi supporters marched in support of the dictator. NTC militiamen sought to disperse the crowd, and gunfire broke out.

October 15, 2011: Fighting with Kaddafi supporters continued in Tripoli. There was also tension between militia coalitions over who had police authority in Tripoli. It was believed that less than a dozen armed Kaddafi supporters were involved, and affluent neighborhoods housing Kaddafi supporters were being searched by NTC gunmen.

October 17, 2011: The other major Kaddafi stronghold, Bani Walid (a town of 50,000, some 150 kilometers southeast of Tripoli), has been captured. The remaining Kaddafi supporters fled, but NTC gunmen are searching the town for any armed Kaddafi supporters who have gone into hiding.

October 19, 2011: In Sirte, NTC gunmen launched another major assault on Kaddafi supporters. This time, thanks to precision NATO bombing, and a dwindling number of Kaddafi fighters, the only remaining neighborhood seemed likely to be cleared.

October 20, 2011: Attempting to flee Sirte in a convoy, Kaddafi was forced out of his vehicle by a NATO bomb and took cover. But soon NTC gunmen found and captured him. About fifty Kaddafi followers were killed or captured (and then usually killed) during the failed escape attempt. Moammar Kaddafi and his son Motassim were declared dead in Sirte. The cell phone camera, which had proved so valuable in getting the news of Kaddafi brutality to the rest of the world, now documented how Kaddafi and his son, and several supporters, were also murdered after their capture. A video was broadcast, on a pro-Kaddafi Syrian TV station, showing Moammar Kaddafi’s son Motassim captured and alive. The next day, the NTC denied that they had Motassim. Now it appears that he was captured and executed. Many factions have gone to Tripoli, or sent part of their forces there. For the rebels, Tripoli is the prize. Not only is it the capital, but it contains the homes and assets of many Kaddafi supporters. What these people own is considered loot for the rebel fighters, and the looting has been going on for several weeks now. Efforts to establish law and order have been weak. Last month, a former Islamic radical leader (Abdullah Ahmed Naker) announced that he had formed the Tripoli Revolutionists Council, backed by 73 militias and over 20,000 gunmen. This new force would police the city and impose law and order. It is unclear how much of that
announcement is puffery, and how much is real. Naker claims he is operating under the authority of the NTC, but other militia groups claim they have authority in Tripoli. There have been threats and some heated arguments between the rival militias, but no large-scale fighting, yet.

October 20, 2011: The al-Quadhafi Family Tree’

The whereabouts, relationships and former roles of the family of ousted leader Colonel Muammar Al-Quadhafi after his capture and death in his Libyan hometown of Sirte is unknown.

October 23, 2011: Interim National Transitional Council leader Mustafa Abdel Jalil announced that the new Libya would be a democracy based on Islamic law. This was said during a ceremony officially recognizing the liberation of Libya from Kaddafi. The problem now is to determine what Libya will become. Establishing law and order is only one of many urgent tasks facing the NTC. While the oil is flowing again, and in every increasing quantity there is an acute labor shortage. Many of the management and technical people who made things work have fled. Many of these key people were foreigners. While it is common for oil rich Arab states to import foreigners to run their economies, Kaddafi preferred foreigners for many government jobs, apparently because he found the foreigners more trustworthy (or easier to get rid of). Now the NTC finds itself with a big shortage of skilled managers and techies. Nothing happens if you give orders and there’s no one able to carry them out. Just getting electricity and water supply working again has been difficult. There’s an even more poignant problem with thousands of wounded NTC fighters, who have not been able to get the medical care they need. The NTC has gotten a lot of cash, weapons and advice from Qatar, and oil rich Kuwait. The Arab Gulf States are flooding Tripoli with advisors, people who speak the language, understand the culture and want to help establish a new Libya that is peaceful, not another threat to Arab nations and the rest of the world. This may be the most crucial foreign aid effort in post-Kaddafi Libya. It’s not just the desire for revenge that is a problem, but how it plays out. You don’t appreciate how valuable law and order is until you don’t have it. The NTC has already had problems with some of the dozens of militias refusing to take orders from anyone. If some form of order is not established, that’s how the new war will begin; with warlords and their armed followers fighting over plunder and power. There is a widespread desire for vengeance against the ten percent of the population that formed Kaddafi’s core supporters. These families grew prosperous in Kaddafi’s service, and now they face economic and social ruin. But who will get what from the unprotected Kaddafi followers? In addition to civil war, there is retribution, which has been occurring more frequently as the Kaddafi forces lost ground. The revenge attacks were particularly evident in Sirte, the coastal town of 100,000 that was Kaddafi’s birthplace and was full of his well-cared for supporters. Sirte was heavily damaged, and looted, during the final battle. Most of the population fled the fighting, and when they return they will find a much less prosperous lifestyle. This is what will motivate a lot of people to oppose the new government, and that will cause lasting bitterness. This will be prolonged by the fact that clans and tribes supported Kaddafi, and these groups often occupy specific areas. Here, armed opponents of the government can find shelter and support.

October 24, 2011: With Kaddafi dead, the next battles involve organizing a functional government, deciding what type of government, and avoiding a civil war between dozens of armed, and independent minded factions. Foreign supporters, especially in the West, have suddenly, and not surprisingly, turned hostile. Libyans who apparently executed Kaddafi, and his followers, after capture are being threatened with prosecution for war crimes. Western and Moslem nations who supported the NTC are fearful that better organized and more fanatic Islamic radical factions will take over the government, and establish another dictatorship, this time one based just on religion, not one man’s megalomania. Another feared option is civil war, because regional loyalties are seen as more potent than religious ones. The major splits are between the east (centered on Benghazi) and
west (Tripoli) along the coast (where most of the population has always lived). The third region is the dry, but oil-rich interior. Here the population is largely Berber and Tuareg (nomadic tribes in southern Libya). There are people from the coast, who comprise most of the Libyan work force in the oil fields. The people of the interior are further split by past loyalties. The Berbers hated Kaddafi, while the Tuaregs were better treated and remained loyal to the end.

October 25, 2011: Muammar Kaddafi and his son Motassim were buried in a secret, unmarked desert grave.

October 27, 2011: In neighboring Tunisia, a moderate Islamist party won control of parliament and will form a government. The Islamic groups in Libya are also maneuvering to gain control of the new Libyan government. Elections are to be held within the year. So far, the Islamic groups have not made any overt move to take control. While prominent among the rebel militias, the Islamic radicals are not particularly popular in Libya.

November 4, 2011: NATO weapons inspectors have found Kaddafi-era chemical weapons (mustard gas), some of which were being destroyed according to international treaty. These weapons, which were invented during World War I (1914-18) were never used by Libya, and no seems to have tried to steal any of them during the chaos of the revolution. However, it's unclear if all the chemical weapons being found had previously been “declared” by Kaddafi (in 2004) and scheduled for destruction (by May 15th of this year). If there are undeclared chemical weapons, there may be a lot of them, and some of them may be still hidden.

October 31, 2011: NATO ended their air campaign over Libya, after seven months. Some 26,000 sorties were flown, nearly 40 percent of them combat missions. The NTC wanted the mission extended a few more weeks, but NATO refused.

November 6, 2011: A convoy of vehicles from Libya was intercepted in northern Niger, near the Algerian border. A gun battle ensued, leaving 13 people from the convoy dead and one soldier wounded. Thirteen people were captured and it was confirmed that the several dozen people in the convoy were Libyans being guided by Tuareg tribesmen from Mali. Thousands of pro-Kaddafi Libyans have followed this route, and Niger is turning back those who cannot pay their own way. Niger does not want to host a lot of broke and angry Libyans. Niger also wants to avoid becoming a base for a pro-Kaddafi guerilla war in Libya. Niger is already taking a lot of diplomatic heat for granting asylum to Kaddafi officials.

November 12, 2011: Niger has decided to give asylum to Kaddafi son Saadi. Another son, Seif al Islam is believed to be somewhere out in the southern Libya desert, trying to make his way to the Niger border. Both sons are wanted for war crimes. The cash shortage means the NTC cannot pay for armed men to be sent to the many weapons depots, to guard them and prevent arms smugglers from carting off the stuff for resale. Foreign governments are demanding better security, and the NTC is hinting that some foreign aid for this specific problem would be appropriate. Oil production is up to about 35 percent of its pre-war level of 1.7 million barrels a day. About ten percent of the oil facilities were damaged during the rebellion, and repairs won't be complete for another 6-8 months. Oil shipments are expected to pass 50 percent of the pre-war level before the end of the year. Local refineries are going again, reducing fuel shortages. Exports are bringing in over $40 million a day, which is going to reconstruction and the generous social welfare payments that Kaddafi believed would keep him in power indefinitely. The NTC has announced that it will disarm (or at least disband) the dozens of rebel militias and create security forces (police and military). But actually doing this is complicated by the tribal militias and growing number of "payback" attacks on real or imagined Kaddafi supporters. Restoring law and order is going to be very difficult, especially since Kaddafi
maintained order largely with secret police and deals with tribal leaders. There have been several other disputes between armed groups, but most are resolved, or at least delayed, without gunfire. There are thousands of rebel gunmen who lost family or friends in the fighting, along with economic loss (home, business or vehicle destroyed) and are looking for revenge and restitution. For the last month, rebels have often sought bloody revenge from Kaddafi supporters, some of whom are still armed. The Kaddafi fans have fallen back on their tribal organizations, and there is a tradition of calling up large numbers of armed men to defend the tribe. The town of Zawiya was a rebel stronghold in the midst of a region that was largely pro-Kaddafi. The rebels held all or part of Zawiya throughout the war. Zawiya controls the road from Tripoli to Tunisia. This was a key supply line for Kaddafi, and the rebels made it largely unusable. The rebel defenders of Zawiya suffered a lot and some of them want payback from their former foes. The Zawiya rebels are going into neighborhoods they know (or believe) Wershifanna live and stealing vehicles, and anything else that strikes their fancy. The local armed Wershifanna resisted and the battles began. A more immediate source of dispute is possession of a major military base. The rebels believe it is theirs by right of conquest, while the Wershifanna point out that it is in their tribal territory. It is believed that there are rebel fighters on both sides of this one.

November 14, 2011: For the last week or so, young rebels from the port city of Zawiya (50 kilometers west of Tripoli) have been fighting groups of men from the local Wershifanna tribe. There have been over a hundred casualties. The rebel fighters accuse the Wershifanna men of having fought for Kaddafi (some did, as the Wershifanna benefitted from living in the Tripoli area and serving Kaddafi). But some Wershifanna were rebels, and there are Wershifanna representatives on the NTC (National Transitional Council) that now (sort of) runs the country. While the representatives of the Zawiya rebels and the Wershifanna on the NTC can agree on a peace deal, they are having a hard time selling it to the young guys out on the coast road who have been shooting at each other.

November 15, 2011: Several hundred uniformed soldiers of the new Libyan Army were sent to the city of Zawiya to halt renewed fighting between rival tribal militias.

November 19, 2011: The last Kaddafi son at large, Saif al Islam Kaddafi, was captured in the south while trying to sneak across the border into Niger.

November 20, 2011: Abdullah al Senussi, the head of intelligence for the Kaddafi government, was captured in the south. NATO intelligence experts will want to interrogate Senussi for what he knows about terror groups Kaddafi supported.

November 24, 2011: The senior officials of the new government were announced and many tribal leaders complained that the tribes were being ignored.

November 26, 2011: The government held a conference of tribal leaders to address the demands of the tribes. Many tribes believe that the new government does not adequately address the interests of the tribes. Many of the rebel militias are based on tribal membership and the tribes are reluctant to disband their tribal armies.

November 28, 2011: A meeting of 250 religious leaders called for disarming civilians and instituting Islamic (Sharia) law. There is popular support for collecting lots of weapons, but not as much for Islamic law. People don't want a religious dictatorship to replace Kaddafi's.

December 1, 2011: The government announced that 50,000 rebel fighters would be trained to be professional soldiers, while another 150,000 rebel gunmen would receive other benefits. All this is part of an effort to disband the dozens of rebel militias that appeared in the seven months before the Kaddafi government fell in August.
December 2, 2011: The UN has extended its work "mandate" in Libya for another three months, to help the new government get organized. The UN is also trying to ensure that the 7,000 prisoners the new government is holding are not mistreated. Many of these prisoners committed atrocities for Kaddafi. In Tripoli, rival militias began shooting at each other. One man was killed and several buildings destroyed.

December 4, 2011: The government has set up a committee to investigate corruption in the oil industry during the Kaddafi years. Billions of dollars in oil profits were believed to be stolen and the new government wants to find who took what, so the guilty can be punished and the money can be recovered. This effort is also meant to discourage new oil corruption problems.

December 5, 2011: In Central Libya, ten people were killed when someone lit a cigarette in an ammunition storage facility. Seven of those killed were African migrants hired as laborers. The government, with NATO help, is still hustling to secure Kaddafi era military bases.

December 6, 2011: Al Qaeda openly urged Libyans to hold on to their weapons, and resist government attempts to collect illegal weapons. Al Qaeda is not popular in Libya, but holding on to an assault rifle or pistol is. Residents of Tripoli have until the end of the month to turn in illegal weapons. This mostly means heavy weapons (mortars, machine-guns and RPGs, but also grenades and explosives). The new government has agreed to crack down on the smuggling of Africans and Arabs to Italy. There's an Italian island 100 kilometers from Libya that the smugglers head for. Once on Italian territory, EU law requires that the illegal migrants be taken care of and often allowed to stay in Europe. This is very unpopular in Europe. NATO asked for the new Libyan government to show some gratitude by helping to halt the flood of illegal migrants. The unruly militias have also caused problems on the Tunisian border, where undisciplined militiamen have gotten into gun battles with Tunisian border guards.

December 7, 2011: The government has given militias from outside the city until December 20th to leave Tripoli. If these militias do not leave the government will close Tripoli to outside traffic and take additional unspecified actions. Several militias are still roaming the city, doing pretty much whatever they want. Militias from places like Zintan and Misarata have taken control of parts of the city and refuse to go. They set up their own checkpoints and take bribes to allow people to pass. Eleven local militias have been organized as the new police for the city, taking control of areas they come from. The national government wants to avoid battles between the local and outside militias.

December 8, 2011: The NTC announced that it would provide amnesty to most of the men who fought for dead dictator Kaddafi.

December 9, 2011: Britain announced that its Libyan military operations had cost about $300 million. A third of that was for munitions (mostly smart bombs and missiles). The total cost of NATO operations in Libya was probably less than $5 billion.

December 10, 2011: There was gunfire in Tripoli, as one of the rebel brigades got into a gunfight with one of the new army units. At least two people were killed and several others wounded. The troops are trying to shut down all the rebel brigade checkpoints, which are often used to extort money and goods from travelers. In one incident, rebels tried to kill the head of the new Libyan Army.

December 16, 2011: The U.S. has lifted most economic sanctions on Libya, enabling the new government to gain access to billions of dollars the Kaddafi government has stashed overseas. But many Libyans fear that many of the unelected members of the NTC will try, and succeed in stealing, a lot of this money. The NTC is not being very open about how it operates and this is usually a sign that bad things are going on behind the bureaucratic smokescreen. The most dangerous of these missiles
are the recently (2004) introduced Igla-S models. Also known as the SA-24, this one is a post-Cold War upgrade of a design that was introduced the same time as the American Stinger. The Igla-S in the hands of terrorists could bring down helicopters and airliners taking off. The exact number of these missiles Russia sold to Libya has not been made public (estimates vary from hundreds to thousands). Nor is it known how many of these missiles Libya still had when the rebellion broke out earlier this year. The U.S. has offered to help disarm the rebel brigades by offering cash for the surrender of shoulder fired anti-aircraft missiles. Over the last three decades some 20,000 of these weapons were bought by Libya. During the 2011 rebellion, thousands of these missiles were believed to have been stolen. Many older Sa-7Bs were seized by the rebels early on and some were used against Kadaffi's aircraft. But it was soon found that some had been taken by criminals or Islamic radicals and moved out of the country. NATO forces teams have seized 5,000 of the Libyan missiles, and at least as many were destroyed from the air. But about half of Kadaffi's missiles are unaccounted for. Most are older, and now, useless models. But some of them are of a more recent vintage. The government has prioritized its security efforts. Taking control of border crossings, providing security for oil facilities, and seeking to maintain controls in the largest city (Tripoli) are all under way. But that means rebel brigades operate unhindered in many parts of the country. Meanwhile, the majority of the rebel brigades has apparently organized themselves into the "Union of Rebels in Libya" and is demanding 40 percent of the seats on the NTC (National Transitional Council) that now tries to run the country. It's a common problem that the armed men who did most of the fighting during the revolution tend to demand a large reward, often in the form of political power, after victory is won. If these privileges are obtained, they often last for generations, usually until the next revolution. Giving into the rebels guarantees continuing unrest because the rebel factions disproportionately represent some tribal, ethnic, or political groups and this generates continuing friction. Elections are supposed to take place in June and this rebel demand will have to be settled by then.

December 30, 2011: The year ends with over a hundred rebel "brigades" refusing to disband. These rebels act like the war is still on and sustain themselves by taking what they want. This makes the brigades increasingly unpopular. The new government is trying to recruit the rebels into government jobs (including the army, but preferably a job that does not require weapons) or at least get the "brigades" (each with anywhere from a few dozen to a few hundred armed men) to surrender the heavy weapons (armored vehicles, mortars, missiles, and heavy machine-guns) they took from Kadaffi era troops and military bases. The government does not want to use force to disarm the brigades, but for many of these rebels that will eventually have to be done, with some violence and residual bad feelings. Meanwhile, the government has all that oil money and, as Kadaffi discovered, you can calm down a lot of people with steady, and well paid, employment.

June 16, 2012: For the second time in the last four months, Islamic radicals have desecrated World War II era graves of Western soldiers in eastern Libya. This is a major embarrassment for the NTC, which knows it needs to work with the West (to sell the oil and import goods and services). At the same time the NTC does not want the local Islamic radicals to declare war on the NTC. The new government may eventually have to go to war with these Islamic terror groups and trigger a round of terrorist violence.

June 20, 2012: Fighting between black African and Arab tribes around the southeastern town of Kufra has left over a hundred dead.

June 24, 2012: Tunisia agreed to a Libyan request and extradited the former prime minister (Al Baghdadi Ali al Mahmoudi) for the Kadaffi government. Mahmoudi fled to Tunisia about a year ago.
June 27, 2012: A Tunisian fishing ship, with a crew of 19, entered Libyan waters and was spotted by a
Libyan patrol boat. The Tunisian ship ignored calls to halt and was fired on. The Tunisian captain was
killed and two sailors were wounded. The rest of the crew was arrested and the fishing ship brought
to a Libyan port.

June 29, 2012: Near the Libyan border Egyptian police seized 138 122mm rockets (with a range of
about 20 kilometers), and some other weapons, that were smuggled in from Libya and apparently
headed for a buyer in Gaza. Police are seizing an increasing number of weapons that Libyans have
stolen from abandoned (during the rebellion last year) military bases. Smugglers are now trying to
get the weapons into neighboring countries where the stuff can be sold.

More fighting between black African and Arab tribes around the southeastern town of Kufra has left
about fifty dead in the last few days. This violence has been going on for months and has left nearly
400 dead so far. The fighting has been getting worse in the last month. The disputes are largely about
control of water and land and are part of centuries old animosity between the Arabs and black
Africans. The two tribes involved have a long history of conflict.

July 1, 2012: Separatist groups in the east attacked election headquarters in Benghazi. Pro-
separatist
militias are the most violent, and determined, in the east (the ancient province of Cyrenaica).

July 2, 2012: ICC (International Criminal Court) members were released from jail. On June 7th two
members of an ICC team (an Australian lawyer and Lebanese interpreter) were arrested when they
showed up in Zintan to discuss having the ICC prosecute Seif al Islam Kaddafi, the son of the former
dictator. The local militias want to prosecute Seif, not trusting anyone else to do it right. The ICC has
not made itself popular in Libya by claiming superior authority to prosecute Seif. The ICC personnel
were accused of spying and were not released until senior ICC officials came to Libya and apologized.

July 7, 2012: For the first time in over 40 years, Libya held national elections. Meanwhile, groups
demanding more autonomy for eastern Libya have shut down half of Libyan oil exports.

Western intelligence officials have revealed that there is increasing chatter, and planning, among
Islamic radical groups, to try and take advantage of the unsettled situation in places like Libya. The
goal remains the same: taking control of the Moslem nation and using that as a springboard for
world conquest.

Islamic conservatives appeal to about 20 percent of the population, and this would be enough to
sustain an Islamic terrorist campaign. This is what Libyans fear the most, a replay of the Islamic terror
that has already occurred in Egypt and Algeria in the 1990s, and Iraq a decade later. Al Qaeda and
their ilk may only appeal to a minority, but the fact that these groups even exist in Libya is alarming
to nearly all Libyans. Most of the Islamic conservatives openly denounce terrorism, but some groups
do not. The appeal of Islamic conservatism is that they will be less corrupt than more secular rulers.
However, the experience is that the Islamic conservatives quickly become corrupt once they gain
power and are more inclined to oppose elections and retain power indefinitely.

About 85 percent of Libya’s six million people live along the coast. About five percent are still
nomadic. About 90 percent are Arabic-speakers of mixed Arab-Berber ancestry. Berbers who retain
their ancient language and culture, comprise only four percent and most of them live in small villages
in the western hill country south of Tripoli. Other minorities comprise about six percent of the
population. Nearly 100 percent of the population speaks at least some Arabic and 97 percent are
Sunni Moslems.
This development spotlights some fundamental truths about the country. Libya has three distinct physical regions: the northwest coast, the northeast coast, and the Sahara Desert southern region that covers more than 90 percent of the nation. The northwest coastal region (the old Roman province of Tripolitania) consists of the narrow coastal plain and the Jaffara Plain inland. The northeastern Libyan coastal region (roughly the old Roman province of Cyrenaica) lies to the east of the Gulf of Sidra.

The main opponents of the new government will be Islamic radicals and the separatists. Also out there are Kaddafi fans but they will likely keep their heads down because they are still violently hated by most Libyans. The major divisions in the country are ancient. For example, some Libyans still refer to the east by its ancient name, Cyrenaica. Before Kaddafi took over in the 1960s, the monarchy ruled the country as three provinces, each with more autonomy than Kaddafi ever allowed. Many Libyans want a return to this. The eastern group calling for autonomy is led by a great-nephew of the last king of Libya. Compared to Kaddafi, old timers remember royal rule as much kinder and gentler.

In addition to the voters, there are also over 100,000 armed members of over 200 local militias. Some of these are vigilante groups intent on keeping the peace, but many are led by men promising large rewards from the government in return for their men disarming. Some militias have announced that they will never disband and that their demands (Islamic law, autonomy for an area, a guaranteed share of oil revenue) are non-negotiable. The NTC (National Transitional Council) has concentrated on short-term solutions to these militias. Jobs and cash have been handed out freely for temporary peace but this will stop when the elected government assumes power. The new government will have to decide which militias to negotiate with and which to fight. Kaddafi stayed in power for as long as he did by using a combination of rewards and violence against his allies and opponents. This is all most Libyans have known and is likely to return as the primary governing strategy.

July 9, 2012: The voting that began on the 7th is over and results are starting to come in. The Islamic parties have admitted that they lost to the secularist parties in the cities. This is where most Libyans live. But the Islamic groups hope to pick up some seats in the south, where the tribes there are more traditional and religiously conservative. The new parliament will form a government and write a new constitution before the next national elections. The new legislature will have 200 members. While 80 seats are reserved for political parties, 120 seats are contested by individuals. There are 142 political parties and 3,700 individual candidates going after those 200 seats. About 1.7 million of 2.8 million registered voters participated.

July 13, 2012: In Jordan 150 Libyans who had just completed police training rioted when told that the Libyan airline that was to fly them home had delayed their flight. The riots led to buildings being burned down and the use of Jordanian riot police to end the violence.

The program was soon corrupted (not unusual in Libya). Local militia and tribal authorities were allowed to decide who was eligible to go abroad for treatment and the NTC provided cash for that purpose. But soon anyone with the right connections, or a large enough bribe, got a trip to a European or Moslem country for "medical treatment." Many of those going abroad on this program were not ill but they got to take family members as well and expected the NTC to pay them a stipend (several hundred dollars a month) while they were abroad. But many of these travelers were actually migrating and the NTC cut off the stipends and cracked down on who was going. The NTC had to do this because the "medical treatment abroad" program was draining huge amounts of cash from what little the NTC had and making most Libyans (who were not in on the boondoggle) angry.
July 15, 2012: Attempts to crack down on corruption have caused more problems. For example, over 200 Libyans staged a violent demonstration outside the Libyan embassy in Jordan. The demonstrators want the Libyan government to provide them with lots of money for medical, travel, and living expenses. The Libyan government had halted these payments because most of the expense claims were false. All this was because of a program last year to provide medical treatment abroad for wounded rebels.

July 16, 2012: In the southwestern town of Ghadames (on the Algerian border) tribal raiders attacked and killed seven people and wounded over twenty. The raiders were from one of several black African tribes that fled the cities after Kaddafi was defeated. Black Libyans were seen as Kaddafi loyalists (although most were not) and generally persecuted by the rebel militias.

There are still towns and villages in the interior that are dominated by pro-Kaddafi militias. The government has been too busy trying to keep the peace on the coast (where most Libyans, and independent minded militias, live). But eventually the thousands of armed Kaddafi diehards will have to be dealt with.

The newly elected government is encountering resistance from over a hundred armed militias who refuse to hand over 5,000 prisoners. Most of those held are considered Kaddafi loyalists or "war criminals" (for killing civilians during last year's revolution). The government has been able to prevent mass executions of these militia prisoners but there is no judicial system to try them or functioning prisons to hold those convicted. The government has taken control of over two dozen jails throughout the country but has not been able to put all of them back into operation. The NTC itself holds about 4,000 prisoners.

The majority of Libyans are not shy letting anyone know that they do not want Islamic radicals or, as they call them, "Taliban" running the country. Al Qaeda's murderous policies in Iraq, and elsewhere, have turned most Moslems against Islamic terrorism. That sort of thing obviously kills more Moslems than kaffirs (non-Moslems) and is thus unacceptable. But local opposition does not always stop the Islamic terror groups from trying to impose their will anyway, after all, they are on a Mission From God.

Speaking of law, most Libyans indicated they want law based on Sharia (Islamic law) but not Sharia itself. Women want equal (or at least more equal) rights and everyone wants a modern (rather than medieval) version of Sharia.

The NFA and its allies captured nearly half the seats in parliament and will be able to form a coalition government with some smaller reform-minded groups, or maybe not. Inexperience in running a democracy is causing lots of unexpected problems. One of the more ominous ones is accusations by some Islamic conservative parties that they were cheated in the election and righteous violence might be the right response to such mistreatment. That would be a mistake and most Islamic conservatives know it.

July 25, 2012: The July 7th elections put non-Islamic conservatives into power. But the majority party, the National Forces Alliance (NFA) contains many leaders who were active in the NTC (National Transitional Council) that exercised shaky control over the country since the Kaddafi government lost power a year ago. There are still dozens of major tribes and warlords with armed militias and unwillingness to obey all orders from the NTC or, apparently, the newly elected NFA government. The major challenge is to restore rule of law and government without triggering armed resistance from the independent minded militias.
July 29, 2012: In Benghazi someone murdered a former senior intelligence officer, who had joined the rebels early on. There are no suspects, other than families of those who may have lost kin to the Kaddafi intelligence services. That would be a long list of suspects.

Outside the city the convoy of a top military commander was fired on.

July 31, 2012: In Benghazi militia gunmen kidnapped seven Iranian aid workers. There were no ransom or any other demands made for the release of the Iranians. The militiamen only said that they were questioning the captives to see if they were in Libya to try and spread Shia Islam. Iran has the largest Shia population on the planet, but most Sunni Islamic radicals consider Shia heretics and often kill them. Iran has appealed to the UN to get its aid workers released.

Someone raided a jail in Benghazi overnight and released an Islamic terrorist.

August 1, 2012: In Benghazi someone threw a bomb out of a car in an attack on military headquarters. This time the explosion did not hurt anyone. This is the third such attack on this location this year.

South of Tripoli police tracked down some of the men responsible for seven recent bombing attempts. The three would not surrender and were killed. Police captured weapons and bomb components.

In Tripoli there was a brief battle in a market place as two groups fought to see who would get a prime location. One person was wounded.

August 5, 2012: For the fifth time in three months a Red Cross compound (this one in Misrata) was attacked. There were no injuries but the Red Cross halted its operations in Misrata and Benghazi (where earlier attacks had occurred). Islamic radicals are suspected as they object to the Red Cross (which is from non-Moslem countries) on religious grounds.

August 6, 2012: Mauritania refused a request to extradite Moamar Kaddafi's former intelligence chief, Abdullah al Senoussi back to Libya. Senoussi has been jailed in Mauritania, since last May, for trying to enter the country in disguise (as a Tuareg). Senoussi is wanted in Libya and France for various crimes. He is also a potential source of insider information on the Kaddafi government. It is believed that Mauritanian officials want a payoff to either extradite Senoussi or let him go free.

August 7, 2012: Libya is offering to allow over half a million Egyptians to return to their jobs in Libya if Egypt will give up assets former Libyan dictator Kaddafi and his cronies stashed in Egypt. This is a tempting offer. Like all oil-rich Arab states, Libya depended on skilled foreigners for key technical jobs (especially medicine and running the oil operations) and unskilled foreigners for the dirty jobs no Libyan wanted to do (garbage collection and unskilled labor tasks). Some foreign workers have already returned, relying for safety on the assurances of the company or local government they are working for.

At least 30 Libyan rebel fighters have made their way to Syria and joined the rebels there. Videos of the armed Libyans in Syria have been released on the Internet.

A major reason no one can get the government going is corruption. This bribery and theft was somewhat organized under Kaddafi, but now it's a free-for-all and too much money just disappears before it can be spent on needed goods or services. NTC officials found that local leaders could not be trusted and they would often steal much of the money they have been given for distribution to individuals and families. This lack of "civil society" (enough people willing to work for the public good without stealing or engaging in other forms of corruption) is causing widespread anger and
resistance to any new national government. While tribal leaders are more trustworthy, they will also steal. But not as much as strangers and at least you know who the tribal leaders are and who they are related to. Thus the resurgence of tribal politics, for the tribe is an ancient form of government that, in chaotic times, is often the only viable alternative.

August 8, 2012: As agreed, the NTC (National Transitional Council) has handed control of the government over to the recently elected parliament. Forming a new government and running the country won't be easy. There are still dozens of major militias that refuse to cooperate and many more armed groups that will be troublesome if they don't get their way. Attempts to disarm these groups have largely failed, as many militias are feuding with each other and have to contend with armed criminal gangs as well. Kaddafi is now fondly remembered as a bad person who at least kept the peace.

August 10, 2012: In the capital a group of armed men attacked a prison, driving off the guards and freeing eight prisoners. Another inmate was killed, apparently by accident.

In Benghazi a former Kaddafi army general (Mohamed Hadia al Feitouri) was assassinated. Feitouri was one of the first senior officers to join the rebellion and was rewarded with a senior job in the Defense Ministry. There were no suspects in this killing.

August 15, 2012: The Red Cross has suspended relief work in Benghazi and Misrata because of attacks by Islamic conservative groups who believe the Red Cross is trying to convert Libyans to Christianity.

August 18, 2012: In the capital a mob of Libyans attacked the Egyptian consulate and caused property damage. The Libyans were angry at having to wait too long to get visas to enter Egypt.

August 19, 2012: In the capital two car bombs went off, killing two and wounding four. The investigation that followed concentrated on known Kaddafi loyalists. This led to some people connected with a previously unknown pro-Kaddafi in a city 60 kilometers southeast of the capital.

August 20, 2012: In Benghazi someone threw a bomb at the car of an Egyptian diplomat. No one was injured and pro-Kaddafi groups were suspected.

August 22, 2012: In Tarhuna (60 kilometers southeast of the capital) troops arrested the leader of a pro-Kaddafi militia (Katibat al Awfiya) that was pretending to be an anti-Kaddafi group. Over a hundred armored vehicles and many other weapons were seized. During the operation one rebel was killed and eight soldiers and rebels were wounded. Another 13 rebels were arrested, while at least three escaped. Many more of these rebels were believed to be elsewhere. This group was believed responsible for the car bombings in the capital on the 19th.

In Ziltan (160 kilometers east of the capital) a tribal feud turned violent over the last two days, leaving at least 12 dead and dozens wounded. Battles like this are becoming more frequent because of the survival of armed militias and the continued lack of functioning courts in most of the country. Many militias are reluctant to disarm, mainly because of the lack of a judicial system for settling disputes. Tribal councils fill some of the need but there is no supreme authority, as in a formal judicial system. Often the tribal elders are not able to settle disputes which then frequently escalate into violence.

Libya also has to deal with geographic as well as political differences. Libya has three distinct physical regions: the northwest coast, the northeast coast, and the Sahara Desert southern region that covers more than 90 percent of the nation. The northwest coastal region (the old Roman province of Tripolitania) consists of the narrow coastal plain and the Jaffara Plain inland. The northeastern Libyan
coastal region (roughly the old Roman province of Cyrenaica) lies to the east of the Gulf of Sidra. Many people in each of these regions feel more loyalty to their region than they do to Libya. The biggest differences are between the capital (Tripoli) in the west and Benghazi in the east.

Another reason for the persistence of warlords is the corruption, which makes government unreliable for those unable to pay the biggest bribe. The new government makes a lot of noise about dealing with corruption but there is a lot less action. This is compounded by the difficulty in creating a nationwide judicial system. There is a shortage of Libyans with legal training. The Kaddafi era judges were mostly for show and most have fled, or are not trusted if they remained.

Kaddafi suppressed those differences, with bribes and force, via a police state type government. The bribery is still around but the police state tactics are gone. In its place are over a hundred local militias, formed over a year ago to overthrow, and then replace, the Kaddafi officials. Unimpressed with the competence, or intentions, of the new government, most militias kept their guns, their organization, and an attitude that they could make rules as they saw fit. This has not led to general chaos but it has led to a lot of tense situations as the new government tries to deal with all these new warlords. Bribe is preferred over bullets and since the government has control over the oil income, there is cash available for buying peace. The major task is turning these temporary peace deals into long term arrangements. That means disarming the militias and persuading them to turn into political parties, rather than remaining private armies.

August 24, 2012: The four decades of Kaddafi dictatorship ended a year ago. Libya recently had its first ever peaceful, and democratic, transfer of power. But there still isn’t unity or peace. Libya has, until recently, never been a country but rather a patchwork of tribal territories and city states. For the last few centuries Libya was ruled as three separate provinces of an Arab or Turkish empire.

August 27, 2012: The United States resumed full services at its embassy in Tripoli but warned Americans to avoid travel to Libya because of the uncertain security situation. The national police force is still being rebuilt and dozens of the hundred plus armed militias are considered dangerous. This is especially true of the Islamic radical groups, who are often very hostile to non-Moslems.

August 28, 2012: The interior minister admitted that the government would not confront Sunni Islamic terror groups that are attacking, and increasingly destroying Sufi facilities and holy places. The government justified this policy by pointing out the risk of widespread violence if the Islamic radicals were held accountable for their actions.

September 2, 2012: In Benghazi a car bombing killed one army intelligence commander and wounded another. There have been a growing number of such attacks, which appear to be carried out by Islamic terror groups seeking to cripple government efforts to obtain information about exactly who the Islamic radicals are and what their plans are.

September 5, 2012: Mauritania finally agreed to turn over Kaddafi’s secret police chief. The government has been negotiating this for six months. While Mauritania had arrested Senussi for entering the country (from Morocco) on a false passport last March, they said they were under no obligation to honor a Libyan extradition request. Senussi sought to muster enough cash and friends so that he could escape to whichever sanctuary he was headed for. That effort apparently failed. Libya and many Western and Arab intelligence agencies want to talk to Senussi, who was the keeper of Kaddafis most embarrassing and explosive secrets (involving torture, terror and dirty deeds in general). Mauritania was under pressure from many nations to turn over Senussi. One of the things foreigners want to discuss with Senussi was a recently discovered Kaddafi program to store weapons and bomb making materials at many Libyan embassies around the world. These weapons were to be
used to kill Libyan expatriates who were causing Kaddafi problems, and support local terrorists who were working for Kaddafi. Senussi is believed to have been involved with this embassy terrorism support program, which has been in place for decades.

Facts about Abdullah al-Senussi

Former Libyan intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi was one of the closest confidants of Libya’s former leader Col Muammar Gaddafi.

Wanted by both the French authorities and the International Criminal Court, he fled Libya after Gaddafi’s downfall and was arrested as he flew into Mauritania from Morocco in March on a false passport.

Mauritania’s decision to return the former spy-chief to face Libyan justice raises the prospect of some of the closest secrets of the Gaddafi regime being laid bare.

Brig Gen Senussi rose from relatively lowly origins to become one of Libya's most powerful individuals. It was his marriage to Gaddafi's wife's sister in the 1970s that brought him into the ruling inner circle and he took up various roles including deputy chief of the external security organisation.

He was also said to be a close adviser to Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam, according to leaked US embassy documents.

In June 2011 the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for Gen Senussi, along with Muammar and Saif Gaddafi, for crimes against humanity alleged to have been committed particularly against demonstrators in the eastern city of Benghazi at the start of the Libyan uprising in February 2011.

Observers considered him more of an executor than a mastermind behind the activities of the Gaddafi regime. He was nicknamed "the butcher" because of his reputation for brutal behaviour.

September 5, 2012: Mauritania deports former Libya spy chief’

Updated: Abdullah al-Senussi deposed Libyan leader Muammar Quadhafi's former intelligence chief is being held in Tripoli after being deported from Mauritania. Pictures on social media appeared to show Abdullah al-Senussi stepping down from a helicopter in the capital. Libya has promised a fair trial for Mr Senussi, accused of crimes allegedly committed during Col Quadhafi's rule. He fled Libya after last year’s uprising. He is also wanted by France and the International Criminal Court. "Abdullah al-Senussi will have a fair trial according to international standards for human rights, the rights from which Libyans were deprived," Prime Minister Abdurrahim el-Keib told reporters in Tripoli. A spokesman for Libya's attorney general said Mr Senussi had undergone a routine medical check-up and was in good health. He added that the prosecutors would begin questioning him as soon as possible.

BBC Middle East editor Jeremy Bowen says a key question is what he might reveal about extraordinary rendition - the process under which jihadist enemies of Colonel Quadhafi’s Libya were sent back to Libya by the US and Britain. Mr Senussi was arrested on his arrival in Mauritania in March, sparking repeated requests to the west African nation from the Libyan government for his return. "He was extradited to Libya on the basis of guarantees given by Libyan authorities," a Mauritanian government source told Reuters news agency, without giving details. According to reports, Mr Senussi was delivered to an official Libyan delegation headed by the minister of justice. The BBC's correspondent in Cairo says Mr Senussi's extradition to Libya is a blow for the ICC. Not only has the court been trying to win custody of Mr Senussi, he says, it is also arguing that Col Quadhafi's
son Seif al-Islam should also be brought to justice at the court. In March, Mr Senussi was arrested at Nouakchott airport in Mauritania after flying in from Morocco. He was disguised as a Tuareg chieftain and was carrying a fake passport. He was later charged with illegally entering the country and using forged documents, and transferred to the civilian prison in Nouakchott. However, it is believed he has spent most of his time in Mauritania under house arrest at a private villa. Abdullah al-Senussi is accused of ordering the killing of protesters in the eastern city of Benghazi.

September 6, 2012: Sunni Islamic radicals fought with Sufi villagers 50 kilometers southeast of Benghazi as the Sunni gunmen attempted to destroy a Sufi shrine in the village of Rajma. There were about ten casualties and the Islamic radicals retreated. The villagers called on the national government for help. But the government has been reluctant to confront the Islamic radicals, despite the growing number of attacks on Sufi shrines, schools and mosques in the last two weeks. For a year now Islamic radical militias have been attacking Sufi shrines, first in Tripoli and now in eastern Libya. The Sufi, like the Shia (and many similar groups) are minority Islamic sects that conservative factions among the majority Sunni consider heretical. This often leads to violence, as it has for decades in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Al Qaeda, and similar groups, are particularly active in going after "heretical" Moslems. The heretics often fight back, and most Moslems do not back the radicals. The government is trying to avoid a battle between Islamic radicals and the rest of the population, lest Libya suffer what Iraq, Pakistan and Iran are going through.

September 7, 2012: The government informed Lebanon that it has arrested, and will prosecute, ten former Kaddafi officials believed involved in the kidnapping and murder of a senior Shia cleric (Musa Sadr) during an official visit to Libya in 1978. The mysterious death of this senior Lebanese Shia cleric has long been a source of friction between Lebanon and Libya. It is believed that Sadr was killed by Kaddafi at the request of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, as the Sunni Palestinians were then fighting Shia militias in Lebanon (which was in the midst of a civil war that did not end until 1990.)

September 11, 2012: In Benghazi, Islamic radicals attacked a U.S. State Department compound, killing the American ambassador to Libya, another diplomat and two former SEALs acting as bodyguards.

September 13, 2012: Police in Benghazi arrested four men and charged them with involvement in the killing of four Americans on the 11th.

September 14, 2012: The airport in Benghazi was closed for a few hours until police could get Islamic radical groups to stop firing into the air, trying to hit American UAVs (which are flying out of range of the heavy machine-guns used) circling the city in support of the search for those responsible for killing the U.S. ambassador on the 11th.

September 15, 2012: Al Qaeda took credit for the September 11 attack in Benghazi and called for more American diplomats to be attacked wherever possible. No Islamic radical group in Libya has taken credit for the recent attack, apparently because it is obvious that most Libyans are angry about killing the U.S. ambassador and the Americans are determined to find and punish the killers. The Islamic terrorists in general are very afraid of UAV attacks, which have killed hundreds of key terrorist leaders and technicians (bomb builders, publicists, intel specialists).

Oil production is running at 1.4 million barrels a day and oil income for the first seven months of the year was $30.5 billion. This is near pre-revolution levels (1.6 million barrels a day). So there is plenty of money, but there is also lots of corruption and a widespread dependency on oil income. Kaddafi ran a low-budget welfare state, that diverted a lot of the oil money to the Kaddafi family and closest associates. Libyans want a more equitable distribution of the oil money, but the rampant corruption is getting in the way. The basic security problem in Libya is the presence of over a hundred local
militias, formed over a year ago to overthrow, and then replace, the Kaddafi government. Unimpressed with the competence, or intentions, of the new government, most militias kept their guns, their organization and an attitude that they could make rules as they saw fit. This has not led to general chaos, but it has led to a lot of tense situations as the new government tries to deal with all these new warlords. Bribes are preferred over bullets and since the government has control over the oil income, there is cash available for buying peace.

The major task is turning these temporary peace deals into long-term arrangements. That means disarming the militias and persuading them to turn into political parties, rather than remaining private armies. This approach does not work with the hard-core Islamic militias, who are angry that they did not get many votes in the July elections and are still determined to turn Libya into an Islamic dictatorship. The government does not want to go to war with the Islamic radical groups, at least not yet. Until the September 11th attack in Benghazi the government thought it had an unwritten agreement for the Islamic radicals to leave foreign diplomats alone. Now the government has to worry about the Islamic radical groups uniting to oppose any government effort to capture and punish those responsible for killing the American ambassador (which is being hailed by Islamic radicals everywhere as a great victory.) Despite the known presence of al Qaeda affiliated groups in Libya, and Benghazi, the ambassador did not request U.S. Maine Corps embassy guards and preferred to travel around with light security. There were plenty of pro-U.S. Libyan militias around, but apparently no effective security plan for dealing with a well-coordinated attack. Several dozen heavily armed (with assault rifles, RPGs and heavy machine-guns) terrorists attacked the compound the U.S. ambassador was staying in on the 11th. Libyan officials had warned American embassy personnel on September 8th about the increasing danger from Islamic radical groups in Benghazi. Since the attack the U.S. has sent 50 marines and more intelligence personnel to Libya. Finding qualified intel personnel for this was difficult because so many Arab speaking intel specialists are working on the Syria situation (mainly in Turkey and Jordan.) Meanwhile American intel analysts back in the U.S. are going over video (from satellites and UAVs) and electronic intercepts from Libya. American UAVs have been seen over Benghazi since the 11th. All this is being coordinated with Libya’s new intelligence service, which is only a year old and spread thin by the need to track all the militias and Islamic radical groups inside Libya. An FBI investigation team has also arrived and is helping the Libyan police collect and analyze evidence.

September 16, 2012: The government has arrested four people believed involved in the September 11 attack in Benghazi that left the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans dead. The government says it has the names of fifty people involved in the attack and is searching for them. The attack force involved foreign as well as Libyan Islamic radicals. Some of the suspects are believed to have already fled the country and some are believed to be hiding in Egypt. The government believes that the attack was planned in advance to commemorate the 2001 terror attacks in the U.S. and avenge the deaths of Osama bin Laden last year and the current number two al Qaeda leader (Sheikh Abu Yahya al Libi) in Pakistan three months ago. Clips from a new film critical of Islam appearing on the Internet was coincidental and had nothing to do with the attack except to make it easier to stage a demonstration to distract the guards around the house where the four American victims were staying in Benghazi.

September 17, 2012: The government replaced the two officials responsible for security in Benghazi and vowed to do something about all the militias in Benghazi and throughout the country.

September 21, 2012: In Benghazi large (over 20,000 people) crowds forced two Islamic radical militias to abandon their bases which were then looted. The second base attacked was actually held by a pro-government Islamic radical militia that had permission to be there. In trying to defend the
base (and its large supply of weapons) at least 11 were killed and 60 wounded before the militiamen fled. Six of the dead were bodyguards of an army colonel, who was apparently kidnapped.

In Benghazi large crowds continued to march on Islamic radical militia compounds and demand that the groups flee and disband. The crowds were basically pro-democracy and angry that the Islamic radical groups have kept insisting that democracy was un-Islamic and illegitimate (especially after the Islamic radicals did so poorly in recent elections).

September 22, 2012: The government ordered the disbanding of "illegitimate" militias. Who is illegitimate is subject to debate but apparently means any militia that has been openly defying the government, especially the pro-Kaddafi ones controlling some towns in the interior.

September 23, 2012: The government managed to replace the leaders of two of the largest militias in Benghazi with military officers. These new leaders will try to demobilize the militias. Several smaller Islamic radical militias have been persuaded (or compelled) to disband. The government has also ordered all militias to leave military and police bases unless they have explicit government permission to be there.

Meanwhile, outside a government building in Tripoli, two groups of militiamen, demanding more money and privileges from the government, got into a fight with each other that escalated to a gun battle. There were some injuries before police could break it up.

September 25, 2012: A Libyan rebel (Omran Shaaban) who helped seize Muammar Kaddafi last year has died in a Paris hospital. Shaaban and three companions were kidnapped by a militia two months ago and, although eventually freed (via direct intervention by the Libyan president), received injuries that he eventually died from. Because Shaaban had received so much publicity for his role in taking Kaddafi, and had subsequently gone to work for the new government, his death was seen as another example of how the militias were out of control.

NATO has offered advisors and trainers to assist the Libyan security forces in getting organized, so that they can deal with the militia problem once and for all. The Libyans have not yet responded to this offer. The government still lacks the trained manpower in its security forces to remove and replace over a hundred militias. Some of these militias are pro-Kaddafi and rule towns in the interior that always backed Kaddafi. The armed men in those towns agreed to stop fighting in support of Kaddafi (after Kaddafi was killed last year) but, in practice, have not surrendered. Putting these groups out of action and replacing them with government administration could be messy. In the coastal cities many militias have turned into criminal gangs and will remain as such even if they are forced to cease operating in the open as militias. One of the most contentious issues is ownership of property (land, businesses, vehicles, valuables) belonging to Kaddafi, his family, and cronies. Some militias have taken over these properties and are reluctant to let go.

American FBI investigators are still waiting in Tripoli for permission to go to Benghazi to investigate the compound where the American ambassador was killed on the 11th. Libyan police didn't do much investigating at the scene but journalists were all over it, picking up all sorts of stuff (like the ambassador's personal journal). The FBI is stuck in Tripoli because the government believes it isn't safe in Benghazi. The U.S. has withdrawn some staff from the embassy in Tripoli but says these people will be returning soon. American intelligence agencies, using data from a wide variety of sources, believe the attack on the American ambassador was planned in advance to commemorate September 11th, avenge the death of Osama bin Laden, and generally enhance the prestige of al Qaeda and other Islamic radical groups in Libya. That backfired and the Libyans have a list of the usual suspects. While some of these people fled Benghazi, the Libyans did arrest several dozen and have interrogated them. It's unclear how much cooperation is going on between the Libyans and
American intelligence agencies. The U.S. government is now extremely reluctant to have any more personnel killed or wounded in Benghazi. This is partially because the American government initially tried to explain away the September 11th attack as a response to an American anti-Islam film, even though Libyan officials early on advised that this was not the case. There were plenty of Libyan witnesses to the attack to confirm that the attack was planned and carried out like a military operation. One thing U.S. intelligence officials and their Libyan counterparts agree on was that the attack was the work of Libyan Islamic radical group. The Libyans are insistent on the attack having been organized by Libyan radicals, not foreigners. This won't be known for sure until there is some kind of trial.

The main problem with the militias is that most of them have turned into profitable businesses. The militias establish a form of law and order in an area and then extort "protection" money from businesses and "fees" (ransom payments) from the families of people they arrest. There is also some outright theft. When the government tries to move in there are some tense stand-offs and sometimes gunfire. The government forces, usually outnumbered, retreat. But now the government often has the aid of many local civilians, willing to come out in large numbers to defy the militia. This only works if the government has security personnel available to take over a town or neighborhood. The government often does not have the personnel available.

September 28, 2012: The September 11th Islamic terrorist attack on American diplomats (and the death of the American ambassador) mobilized a lot of public anger against the militias and Islamic radicals. While some militias have been disbanded and new pro-government men have taken over control of other militias, there are still plenty of these groups around and beyond government control. But most of the militias are still there. The government now has more popular backing to shut down militias but there is still local support, especially in the interior (where Kaddafi was popular). There are still tribal militias (pro and anti-Kaddafi) fighting in the southeast, with government officials not having much success in persuading anyone to make peace. Then there is the corruption, which is rampant and the single biggest problem in the country. It is the corruption and greed that are at the root of most government problems. There is not a lot of trust but there is a big sense of entitlement.

September 28, 2012: In Benghazi several hundred people demonstrated in favor of Islamic radical militia Ansar al Shariah. Police prevented the demonstrators from getting violent or killing anyone. Ansar al Shariah is suspected of participating in the September 11 attack that killed the American ambassador and denies any involvement. The popular anger to the ambassador's death led to many Islamic radical militias being attacked by mobs and the police. This included Ansar al Shariah and this group is trying to resist.

After more than month of negotiations the government secured the release of seven Iranian aid workers who were kidnapped by radicals on July 31st.

October 1, 2012: Someone threw a grenade at a police patrol in Benghazi, wounding two policemen.

October 2, 2012: Pro-government have surrounded the West Libyan town of Bani Walid (170 kilometers southeast of Tripoli). With a population of about 100,000, this town was always pro-Kaddafi and is the last refuge of pro-Kaddafi militias (who have been misbehaving even after the Kaddafi government was overthrown last year). The pro-Kaddafi forces have been ordered to surrender, or face an attack on the town.

In Turkey, security officials arrested two Tunisian Islamic radicals on suspicion that they were involved with the September attack that killed the U.S. ambassador in Libya. The two were on an American watch list and were travelling using false passports.
October 3, 2012: Islamic terrorists are believed responsible for killing three policemen at a checkpoint 260 kilometers east of Benghazi.

October 4, 2012: American FBI investigators arrived in Benghazi (in armored vehicles, guarded by American commandos) to examine the consular building where Islamic terrorists killed the U.S. ambassador on September 11th. Foreign (including American) journalists have already picked through the ruins and found that many documents were still there, including the ambassador's journal (parts of which were published in U.S. media) and classified material. The U.S. State Department delayed the arrival of the FBI for three weeks because of security concerns. These were legitimate, but did not dissuade numerous foreign journalists, aid workers or business people from operating in the city. This delay has become a political issue in the United States, where a presidential election campaign is underway. In Benghazi the FBI investigators stayed only about 12 hours and then left, leaving much investigating (like interviewing witnesses) undone.

October 7, 2012: The newly elected parliament voted to reject the new prime minister because of an inability (over the last four weeks) to put together a satisfactory selection of ministers and thus form a government. The problem is the inability of the many factions (based on tribe, ethnicity, town, neighborhood or Islamic radical groups) to agree on who should get what.

The Libyan government is cooperating with American intelligence agencies in the search for those who killed the American ambassador. Little is being said about this investigation, in order to keep down the risk of damaging leaks. Apparently the U.S. CIA and other intel agencies had a lot of information on Benghazi Islamic radicals and what they were up to. But publication of how that information was collected could jeopardize the methods and sources.

In Benghazi a government program to disarm the militias has managed to take over a thousand rifles and rocket launchers out of circulation as people respond to a call for surrendering weapons. So far about two dozen militias have disbanded, but most resist calls to shut down. The situation is still volatile.

October 8, 2012: The September 11th Islamic terrorist attack on American diplomats (and the death of the American ambassador) has become a contentious issue in the United States, mainly because of the upcoming November 6 presidential elections (for the president and most members of the national legislature). The current government is being accused of ignoring the terrorist threat in Libya despite the media coverage of the threat beforehand and subsequent leaks of American intelligence alerts about potential attacks on American diplomats there. While an embarrassing, and fatal, lapse in judgment and administration of security, the nearness of elections makes the issue a political crisis with all manner of accusations being tossed around. The U.S. government did admit a week ago that it was indeed a terrorist attack, but the weeks of delay in getting the American (FBI) investigators to Benghazi and apparent disputes between the intelligence agencies and presidential political advisors is apparently hindering the pursuit of the attackers. Some of the leaked documents indicate the American ambassador had requested increased security, but was turned down by the State Department. That said, it's still unclear why the ambassador chose to spend September 11th (a day many Islamic terror groups liked to attack Americans on) in such a vulnerable place (Benghazi, noted for its many Islamic radical groups and in a lightly guarded consular compound, rather than the heavily guarded embassy back in Tripoli.)

October 13, 2012: Someone tried to kill a senior intelligence official in Benghazi. The bomb was placed under the official's car but he got out of the car after starting it to go back into his home, where he was when the car blew up. There have been similar attacks recently, apparently in an effort to reduce the effectiveness of government intelligence efforts.
October 14, 2012: The newly elected legislature has selected a new prime minister. The previous one was dismissed for being unable to form a government after 25 days. The problem there was the inability to pass out ministry control in a way that satisfied most political factions. The new prime minister will have the same difficulties. The main problem is the tribalism and the lack of willingness to do anything for the greater good.

October 14, 2012: Ali Zidan elected Libya's new prime minister Libya's national congress has elected a new prime minister, Ali Zidan. Mr Zidan, an independent, won 93 votes - a majority among those present. He beat a candidate favoured by the Justice and Construction party - which is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood. The president of the national assembly, announcing his victory, asked Mr Zidan to propose a cabinet within two weeks. The previous PM, Mustafa Abu Shagur, was dismissed a week ago after failing to form a government. Mr Zidan was a career diplomat for Colonel Muammar Gaddafi before defecting in 1980 and joining the opposition in exile. Local observers see him as a liberal with a strong personality, says the BBC's Rana Jawad in Tripoli. He served the former transitional government as its Europe envoy, and was seen as a key player in convincing the ex-French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, to support the uprising against Colonel Gaddafi. His election comes at a critical time, with security still not established across the country and western Libya seeing outbreaks of renewed violence, our correspondent adds. Source: BBC News Africa

October 15, 2012: The U.S. has agreed to help organize and train a counter-terrorism commando force. This would enable the government to quickly shut down any outbreaks of Islamic terror group fighting.

October 15, 2012: Tripoli prison suffers mass breakout' More than 100 inmates have escaped from the al-Judaida prison in the Libyan capital, Tripoli. The prisoners are said to be of various nationalities and officials say about 60 have so far been recaptured. It is not clear how the breakout happened. Al-Judaida is one of Tripoli's largest jails. Human rights groups accuse officials of abusing inmates. The mass escape comes less than a week before the first anniversary of Col Muammar Gaddafi's death. The head of Libya's national guard, Khaled al-Sharif, told the BBC that out of the 120 inmates that escaped at least half have so far been captured. He said that some were illegal African migrants imprisoned for immigration violations and others were Libyans with criminal convictions. Circumstances surrounding the prison break are unclear and officials say an investigation is under way. The national guard says it has set up checkpoints in the area to try to hunt down the escaped prisoners. Libyan jails are currently under the control of an array of different military councils and brigades. The BBC's Rana Jawad in Tripoli says prisons in the capital fall under the authority of the justice ministry and are guarded, in theory, by the ministry's police force. However, Libya still lacks a comprehensive and organised public security force following the conflict last year, she adds. Earlier this year an attempted breakout from another prison in the capital saw parts of that facility burned down. Amnesty International described "widespread" abuses at the al-Judaida after the ousting of Colonel Gaddafi. The former Libyan leader was killed after being captured in his birthplace of Sirte on 20 October last year. BBC News Africa

October 20, 2012: The youngest son of Moamar Kaddafci (Khamis) was killed during the fighting in Bani Walid. Khamis commanded a brigade last year and fought against the rebels. He disappeared and was reported killed several times. This time he appears to be really dead. The town has been surrounded all month and government forces are now advancing to the center of town and fighting street by street.

Stolen Libyan weapons (Russian anti-aircraft and French anti-tank missiles) have been seen in Gaza and at least one anti-aircraft missile was used recently, without success. Thousands of weapons
(mostly rifles, pistols, and machine-guns) were stolen by smugglers last year and taken out of the country. They are showing up throughout the region.

The investigation of the murder of the American ambassador (and three other State Department employees) on September 11th has come up with the names of several Libyan Islamic radical group leaders but few arrests. Most Libyans are upset about the September 11 attack, but there’s not a lot of enthusiasm for starting a war with Islamic radical groups. In the United States, the September 11 attack has become a political controversy because of upcoming (November 6) elections. It appears that the U.S. government did not increase diplomatic security in Libya to the level that the local American diplomats there requested. The September attack led to the withdrawal of American security officials (mainly the CIA) from Benghazi. It will take a while to rebuild the American intelligence operation in Benghazi.

Libya clashes in ex-Kaddafi bastion Bani Walid' Pro-government forces have been fighting for control of the West Libyan town of Bani Walid (170 kilometers southeast of Tripoli) for most of the month. With a population of about 100,000, this town was always pro-Kaddafi and the last refuge of pro-Kaddafi militias (who had been misbehaving even after the Kaddafi government was overthrown last year). The pro-Kaddafi forces recaptured the town late last year, after the rebels seized it. The town became a sanctuary for anti-government groups and the government finally organized another effort to take control of the town. This led to over a week of shelling followed by a ground attack which is just about over. There have been over 300 casualties, most of them civilians hurt during the shelling.

The basic problem is that the new government has not been able to organize a national police force yet and has depended on local militias to maintain law and order. The militias are often run by tribal leaders or local warlords, and this causes problems if you send them to help maintain order somewhere else (where they are often seen as tribal invaders). Kaddafi recognized and supported tribal affiliations and these loyalties (to divide potential enemies) and this makes it difficult to establish a workable national government. One asset the government does have is lots of oil revenue. But the widespread corruption cripples efforts to use that money to build national unity.

October 22, 2012: Long-time Libyan dictator Moamar Kaddafi was deposed and killed a year ago but his legacy fights on. Kaddafi used tribal loyalties to maintain power and favored certain tribes, and some of the pro-Kaddafi tribes are still fighting. The violence is not so much about putting Kaddafi followers back into power but holding on to Kaddafi era privileges and avoiding punishment for crimes committed to support Kaddafi’s rule. One example is on the southern border, where the pro-rebel Tabu tribe has been put in charge of the border (with Sudan, Chad, and Niger) security. There they constantly skirmish with the pro-Kaddafi Zwai. Another element of this rivalry is that the Tabu are black African in orientation while the Zwai are Arab. Kaddafi supported Arab domination over black Arabs, something many Arabs still support.

October 31, 2012: Libyan parliaments approves new government’

Libya’s General National Congress equivalent to Parliament has approved the new government led by Prime Minister Ali Zidan. The vote comes a day after protesters unhappy at the make-up of the proposed cabinet disrupted proceedings. Mr Zidan’s list includes a mixture of liberal figures and Islamists as he tries to build a coalition acceptable to all parties. The previous Prime Minister, Mustafa Abu Shagur, was dismissed after Congress voted down his cabinet. Only two-thirds of the assembly’s 200 members attended the session on Wednesday and after the vote, the session abruptly adjourned for prayers. The head of Congress and Libya’s interim leader, Mohammed Magarief, said he had been advised by security guards to end the session early. About 100 protesters stood outside the Congress building, but there was no repeat of Tuesday’s disturbances. Inclusive
cabinet: The new government has representatives from the two biggest blocs in the Congress - the Alliance of National Forces, led by liberal former Prime Minister Mahmoud Jibril, and the Muslim Brotherhood’s Justice and Construction Party. Mr Zidan said he had tried to strike a balance between Libya’s different regions in making the appointments. According to his list, the defence and interior ministries would be headed by ministers from the eastern city of Benghazi, considered to be the cradle of last year’s revolution that ended Muammar Gaddafi’s rule. Two women are also among the ministers proposed by Mr Zidan. The protesters reportedly said some of the proposed ministers had links to Col Gaddafi. Despite largely peaceful elections in July, Libya’s transition continues to be affected by instability. Reining in the different militia and trying to integrate them into a single national army will be one of the biggest challenges for any new government, analysts say.

November 1, 2012: In Tripoli a new government was accepted by the legislature. This was the second attempt, as the first government selected was turned down and armed threats were made. There are still some militias threatening violence, but not enough of them this time to stop the government selection process.

November 3, 2012: In Tripoli dozens of armed men, identifying themselves as former rebels against Kaddafi, blocked access to the national assembly building. The situation was defused without violence after a day or two when representatives of the armed men met with government leaders.

November 4, 2012: In Benghazi a car bomb went off outside a police station wounding three policemen. In Tripoli rival militias fought each other, leaving at least five dead.

November 16, 2012: Egyptian border guards caught Libyan smugglers trying to bring 35 anti-tank guided missiles into Egypt. There are still a lot of Kaddafi era weapons lying about, often hidden by looters waiting to find a buyer, or someone to use the stuff on.

The 42 years of Kaddafi rule left its mark. Kaddafi was a clever and manipulative dictator. He portrayed himself as a populist servant of the people but he was a dictator, and in the end that’s what got him overthrown and killed. Most Libyans grew up under Kaddafi’s erratic and autocratic rule and have little knowledge or experience with democracy. To many Libyans, being a self-righteous bully seems like a proper way to conduct yourself. After all, it worked for Kaddafi. Old habits are hard to get away from.

The government is still dealing with about 100,000 internal refugees, driven from their homes by factional fighting. Some 40 percent of the refugees are from Bani Walid, the last town to openly support Kaddafi. Bani Walid was taken by pro-government militias late last month and is still a lawless and dangerous place. Anti-Kaddafi militias still roam the town looking for Kaddafi supporters and stuff to steal. This West Libyan town (170 kilometers southeast of Tripoli) originally had a population of about 100,000. This town was always pro-Kaddafi and the last refuge of pro-Kaddafi militias (who had been misbehaving even after the Kaddafi government was overthrown last year). There are still some small groups of armed Kaddafi supporters around Bani Walid and the unrest down there is expected to last for a while, although this chaos should be gone by the end of the year. This may change if some of the other pro-Kaddafi towns in the interior try to defy the new government.

November 19, 2012: The government admits that it has not yet arrested anyone responsible for the September 11th attack in Benghazi that killed the American ambassador. Some suspects are known but remain unquestioned by the security forces. Despite popular protests after the attack that drove some Islamic terrorists from the city, those responsible for killing the ambassador are protected by powerful Islamic radical militias and the Libyan government has more pressing problems with feuding pro-government militias and armed anti-government groups (mostly supporters of the late dictator
Kaddafi). Meanwhile a team of American special operations troops are recruiting Libyans to be part of a government counter-terrorism commando force. The Arab speaking Americans will select and train several hundred suitable candidates. It’s unclear if the training will take place in Libya or somewhere else. The government needs some way to deal with a possible coup attempt by Islamic radicals. These groups, which include some al Qaeda affiliates are angry and mystified at not receiving a majority of the votes in recent elections. They blame America and Israel and, as usual, accuse Libyans who oppose them of not being proper Moslems. This could get ugly and most Libyans know it.

November 21, 2012: Benghazi police chief shot dead by three gunmen.

November 29, 2012: Protestors representing wounded veterans of last year’s rebellion lifted their two day blockade of the country’s largest refinery. The government agreed to resume sending wounded rebels overseas for medical treatment. The problem is that the government wants to do this without allowing another huge bout of corruption. This all began six months ago when an anti-corruption effort caused problems with wounded rebels. This was because the government halted automatic payments for medical, travel and living expenses of many wounded rebels sent overseas for medical treatment. All this was the result of a program, started last year, to provide medical treatment abroad for wounded rebels. The program was soon corrupted (not unusual in Libya). Local militia and tribal authorities were allowed to decide who was eligible to go abroad for treatment, and the government automatically provided cash for that purpose. But soon anyone with the right connections, or a large enough bribe, got a trip to a European or Moslem country for "medical treatment." Many of those going abroad on this program were not ill, but they got to take family members as well and expected the government to pay them a stipend (several hundred dollars a month) while they were abroad. Many of these travelers were actually migrating, and the government cut off the stipends and cracked down on who was going. The government had to do this, because the "medical treatment abroad" program was draining huge amounts of cash from what little was available at the time, and making most Libyans (who were not in on the boondoggle) angry. Some legitimate medical care cases were cut off as well and they have been demonstrating for justice, or at least more money. The government still has a problem with the wounded veterans program because of the corruption so rampant in the country.

December 4, 2012: Muhammed Jamal Abu Ahmad, an Islamic terrorist leader believed responsible for attack that killed the American ambassador to Libya and three others last September was captured in Egypt. U.S. intelligence agencies cooperated with Egyptian police to grab Ahmad, who was establishing al Qaeda bases in Egypt and Libya and spent most of his time in both countries.

December 5, 2012: In the southern town of Sabha 196 convicts escaped from a prison, after overwhelming their guards. Most of the escapees were common criminals, but some were political or Islamic radicals.

December 8, 2012: Tunisian police arrested two armed men, apparently from Libya as they tried to sneak into Algeria. The two were armed and contained maps (of potential targets in Algeria) as well as Islamic radical literature and other incriminating documents. Tunisian border police have been seeing more Libyan Islamic radicals of late.

The judicial system, which had atrophied during decades of Kaddafi rule is overwhelmed with cases demanding justice for crimes that occurred while Kaddafi ran the country or during the revolution last year. If there is no justice in the courts, many of the plaintiffs are threatening to seek help from their tribes, which often means a blood feud. The tribal councils have already handled a lot of disputes and have replaced the ineffective courts for a lot of routine business (contract and family
disputes). The new courts have to prioritize their efforts and first in line are cases that impact the economy, especially the flow of goods that keep the population fed and otherwise cared for.

For the moment the government just wants to keep the several dozen major militias from interfering with the economy. But down the line (in a year, or several) the government will try to disband these private armies. The U.S. is providing some help in the form of sharing intelligence collected on Libyan militias as part of an American effort to identify Islamic terror groups. The government has quietly allowed American intel operations in the country although the U.S. is asking for more freedom to operate (including the use of UAVs for photo and electronic reconnaissance.) Many government officials, especially those in the security services, are eager for the American help. That’s because Islamic terror groups have been sending death squads after senior police and intelligence officials, killing about twenty so far this year. This is part of an intimidation program intended to keep police pressure off Islamic radical groups. The Islamic terrorists want to take control of the government but know that the majority of Libyans are opposed to that. So the Islamic terrorists are trying to defend themselves by persuading the police to back off.

The government is under pressure to suppress the Islamic radical militias, and especially those allied with al Qaeda. But there are too many of these armed Islamic terror groups around for the security forces to deal with. The newly (since November 14) organized government is scrambling to rebuild the welfare state Kaddafi had built to keep most Libyans quiet for decades. This has proved difficult because so many Kaddafi era bureaucrats fled the country and left records and government organizations in a disorganized state. This halted payment to a lot of foreign suppliers, some of whom are now refusing to deliver needed goods or services without additional or even advance, payments. This distrust of Libya has slowed expansion of oil production as well, meaning a vicious circle of less money and more fear.

December 16, 2012: Al Qaeda has established a presence in the southwest, especially in the town of Ghat on the Niger border. The Algerian border is also nearby. Niger has been hostile to Islamic terrorists, but cannot stop the smugglers who take weapons from Libya, via Niger to northern Mali. Arms dealers and smugglers, who have thousands of weapons looted from government storage areas last year, have concentrated in Ghat, to move weapons to Mali and other points south, and also to supply local Islamic terror groups who have set up shop in Ghat. The Libyan government has little control over Ghat and can’t spare the resources to change that any time soon. Al Qaeda sanctuary has been created in Ghat. This is part of an al Qaeda plan to establish sanctuaries in Libya and northern Mali and form a coalition of the various Islamic terror groups in those two places. While there has been some progress, al Qaeda continues to find Islamic terror groups willing to fight each other as well as the more traditional foes (the West and most governments in Moslem nations). This factionalism played a role in the collapse of Islamic terrorist sanctuaries in Somalia, Pakistan and Yemen. Libya will probably be no different because some of the Islamic radical militias are already on bad terms with each other.

January 28, 2013: Britain announced that it has detected a threat to their embassy in Tripoli. Four days earlier Britain urged its citizens to leave Benghazi. Germany and Netherlands followed suit, claiming the same reason (fear of Islamic terrorist attack).

January 30, 2013: In the aftermath of the Islamic terror attack on an Algerian natural gas facility just across the border, the government has increased security around its own oil and gas operations. Islamic radicals in Libya have not attacked these assets because the cash generated by oil and gas sales still benefits most Libyans. Thus an attack on this source of cash would be very unpopular. Foreign Islamic radical groups would be less concerned about losing popularity inside Libya. Being on a Mission From God does that to you.
January 31, 2013: The government now demands that all foreigners wishing to enter Libya must get a visa. This is meant to keep out gangsters and Islamic radicals. It does keep some out, but most can get into Egypt and sneak across the border.

February 6, 2013: An Algerian army base just across the border was attacked by about 50 Islamic terrorists from Libya. With the assistance of Algerian warplanes and attack helicopters the attack was defeated and at least two of the attackers were killed. The army pursued the attackers to the border and captured one of them alive.

February 9, 2013: The government sharply reduced the number of visas issued to Lebanese and is seeking to keep pro-Iran and Islamic radical Lebanese out of the country.

On the Egyptian border police continue to seize shipments of weapons (stolen from government warehouses during the revolution) being smuggled out. The Libyan border police can be bribed, not so for most of the Egyptians. Most of the smuggled weapons are getting through to Gaza and onto ships where the smugglers can reach even more distant markets.

The government has tried to channel some of the Islamic radical violence in a useful direction. The government in Tripoli hired an Islamic radical militia to eliminate the illegal drugs that are increasingly common. The Islamic radicals went at it but also sought to enforce all the other lifestyle rules they favored. This produced armed confrontations with secular militias. Another problem with all these militias is the growth in crime. Murder, rape, theft, and kidnapping are all more common. Often the crooks are militia members, going gangster on the side to augment their small (or non-existent) militia wage. The warlords who often lead these militias are sometimes running criminal enterprises as well. Many militias are basically local self-defense groups, but even some of these see no problem in plundering nearby areas they don’t control. The murder rate has increased five times over the last three years and most other crime has shown similar jumps.

A favorite target of the Islamic radical militias has been the small Christian community. Most of the 100,000 Christians who were in Libya two years ago are gone, fleeing growing crime and persecution. The Islamic radical groups feel it is their duty to persecute non-Moslems and drive them out of the country. The government is officially against this sort of thing but has neither the forces nor the will to take on the Islamic radical militias over this issue.

Then there is the Mali problem. Libya’s southern border is 4,600 kilometers long and largely desert. Anyone with enough fuel, water, and a GPS can sneak across. Libya has officially closed this border since late December but military patrols have sighted vehicles and camel caravans crossing in both directions. The recent defeat of al Qaeda in Mali is believed to have sent some of the surviving Islamic terrorists into Libya but information is scant and no one really knows.

Western intelligence agencies have told Algeria and Libya that there are a lot of Islamic terrorists operating in southern Libya and it will be from there that more attacks will be launched on Algerian, Libyan, and Tunisian gas and oil facilities. American intelligence also found some Islamic terrorists who were involved in both last month’s attack in southern Algeria and the one in Libya (Benghazi) last September, that killed the U.S. ambassador to Libya. There is so little government control in Benghazi that there has been no effective police action to find and arrest any of these suspects.

February 11, 2013: Libya To Shut Egypt, Tunisia Borders For 1st year Anniversary'

Libya will shut its borders with Tunis and Egypt for five days as a security measure ahead of the country’s two-year anniversary marking the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi, the prime minister said. Ali Zeidan announced the closure during a news conference as part of list of security measures following
concerns about potential militia violence surrounding the celebrations. "As of midnight on February 14th until the 18th, no one will be allowed to cross the Libyan borders between Egypt or Tunis as a security precaution," he told reporters on. On February 17, Libyans will mark two years since an armed revolt ended Gaddafi's rule and celebrations are planned to begin on February 15. But many Libyans, particularly those in the east, are urging citizens to take to the streets to protest the government’s inability to so far provide security by disarming militias or moving towards writing a constitution. Security is particularly a concern in the east of the country where violence towards foreigners and police assassinations have become a regular occurrence by unknown extremist militias. On January 25, the United Kingdom urged their nationals to leave Benghazi citing a "specific and imminent" threat to Westerners days after a deadly attack by Islamist militants in neighbouring Algeria. Flights to Libya were suspended by Lufthansa and Austrian Airlines until after the February 17 citing "tensions on the ground" in the country. Many international organisations, including the United Nations mission in Libya and Western embassy staff will be on lockdown starting on February 14 as a safety measure. Security in Tripoli and Benghazi have been increased in the past week, with several random check points by Libyan police and militias affiliated with the interior ministry popping up on all major roads. "We will focus on tightening security at airports also in order to avoid any issues that will derail the celebrations," Zeidan said.

February 12, 2013: The second anniversary of the revolution is being memorialized on the 15th but there is not much cause for celebration. Disunity, corruption, warlords, and an inability to provide law and order has stalled the economy and the return of government services. The oil income allows the government to delay another major rebellion but if the current conditions persist, the country will fall back into another period of open war. There are still over 200,000 gunmen in illegal militias and the government is moving slowly to organize police forces capable of shutting down these groups. The militias are a major reason why it has been so difficult to get the economy and government going again.

March 11, 2013: Over a hundred local men blockaded an oil field south of Benghazi and halted production of 120,000 barrels of oil (and lots of natural gas) a day until the government hired more local men to work at the field. A deal was finally worked out on March 28th and production resumed. The job disputes are usually over who will be hired to provide security. Foreigner handle most of the technical jobs because few Libyans are qualified for this work. But security is another matter and rival militias battle each other and whoever the current oil field security people are to obtain these jobs.

March 14, 2013: A Christian (Egyptian Coptic) church in Benghazi was attacked again by Islamic radicals. The first attack occurred last month.

March 17, 2013: One of the men (Faraj al Shibli) believed responsible for leading (or planning) the Benghazi attack last September that killed the American ambassador was arrested and charged with that crime. The attack was planned and carried out by one of the Islamic terrorist militias, and since then the government has been trying to muster the determination and firepower necessary to go after those responsible for the attack.

March 21, 2013: Member of parliament Hassan El Amin has fled the country (for Britain) because of growing threats from Islamic radical militias. Amin was the head of the human rights committee in parliament and had criticized the Islamic radical militias for using violence against political and religious opponents. While other outspoken members of parliament have a lot of bodyguards and often the backing of a tribal or political militia, Amin had neither.

March 26, 2013: In the south fifty men escaped from a prison after a riot there distracted the guards. One prisoner was shot dead during the escape and 13 others were quickly captured.
March 27, 2013: Three British women accused Libyan militiamen of briefly kidnapping and raping (or fondling, it’s unclear which) them. The three were British citizens but of Pakistani ancestry, so both the British and Pakistani ambassadors demanded that the Libyan government do something. This all began when a convoy of ten trucks from Britain, carrying medical supplies for Gaza, was stopped at the Egyptian border by Egyptian police. Egypt does not like the foreign activists coming in like this to support the Islamic terrorist group Hamas that runs Gaza. The three women had left the convoy (with two male companions) and headed for the Benghazi airport to fly back to Britain when they were attacked. The militiamen often do what they like but it only becomes a big news story when foreigners are involved.

March 28, 2013: In Tripoli Sunni extremists bombed a Sufi shrine. Sunni Islamic radicals have been attacking local Sufi Moslems with increasing ferocity for over a year. In some cases Sunni gunmen attempting to destroy Sufi shrines are repulsed by armed Sufis. So now the Sunni Islamic terrorists sneak around at night planting bombs. The Sufis have called on the national government for help. But the government has been reluctant to confront the Islamic radicals, despite the growing number of attacks on Sufi shrines, schools, and mosques in the last year. Ever since the fall of Kaddafi two years ago, the Islamic radical militias have been attacking Sufi shrines, first in Tripoli and then in eastern Libya. The Sufi, like the Shia (and many similar groups), are minority Islamic sects that conservative factions among the majority Sunni consider heretical. This often leads to violence, as it has for decades in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Al Qaeda, and similar groups, are particularly active in going after "heretical" Moslems. The heretics often fight back, and most Moslems do not back the radicals. The government is trying to avoid a battle between Islamic radicals and the rest of the population, lest Libya suffer what Iraq, Pakistan, and Iran are going through.

March 30, 2013: A military camp 800 kilometers south of the capital was attacked by several dozen armed men (travelling in eight vehicles). Two soldiers were killed and the attack was repulsed. It’s unclear what this was all about, although the camp still contains warehouses full of Kaddafi era weapons and ammo.

Over the last two years the government has been expelling hundreds of thousands of black African migrants, some who have lived and worked in Libya for years. New migrants are being forced back as well, even though these people are seeking to pass through and get to Europe and jobs. This animosity towards black Africans is the result of former dictator Kaddafi hiring thousands of black African mercenaries to help fight the rebels. Add this to the usual racist attitudes of Arab and Berber Libyans (who are most of the population) towards black Africans and you get some nasty immigration policies.

While many Libyans oppose the militias, these gangs often do things that are popular with most civilians. For example, militiamen hunt down and torture or kill Kaddafi supporters. This sometimes gets very violent, as in the case of Tawergha, a pro-Kaddafi town outside the port city of Misarata that Kaddafi forces fought hard to conquer. In the process thousands of rebels and civilians were killed and much of the city damaged by artillery and street fighting. The Kaddafi forces used Tawergha as their main base and over the last two years militiamen have been destroying that town and forcing its 40,000 largely pro-Kaddafi residents to flee.

Kaddafi recognized and supported tribal affiliations and these loyalties (to divide potential enemies) and this makes it difficult to establish a workable national government. One asset the government does have is a lot of oil revenue. But the widespread corruption cripples efforts to use that money to build national unity. As the old saying goes, “all politics is local” and is what the government still lacks in the web of tribal connections that Kaddafi used for so long to keep things quiet. This technique eventually failed and the Kaddafi-era ability to keep the tribal leaders quiet is missed.
The basic problem is that the new government has not been able to organize a national police force yet and has depended on local militias to maintain law and order. The government pays some 200,000 militiamen (about eight percent of the total workforce), and being one of these gunmen is an attractive proposition for a young man without much education. The militias are often run by tribal leaders or local warlords, and this causes problems if you send them to help maintain order somewhere else (where they are often seen as tribal invaders). The militia leaders also cause problems, with some of them not passing on all the payroll the government provides. The leaders blame the pay shortfall on the government. Not all the militias are on the government payroll and they operate like criminal gangs to meet their expenses. The Islamic radical militias are causing a lot of popular anger because of efforts to impose restrictive lifestyle rules and attacks on non-Muslims (especially Christians who have lived in Libya for generations). Most of these Christians are Egyptian Copts, and the Egyptian government is angry that their Libyan counterparts have not been able to stop this abuse.

The government still does not control its southern borders. This is because former (and deceased) Libyan dictator Moammar Kaddafi used tribal loyalties to maintain power and favored certain tribes down there. Although Kaddafi was deposed two years ago, many of the pro-Kaddafi tribes in the south are still fighting. The violence is not so much about putting Kaddafi followers back into power but holding on to Kaddafi era privileges and avoiding punishment for crimes committed to support Kaddafi’s rule. Then there is the racial angle. In the far south the pro-rebel Tabu tribe has been put in charge of border (with Sudan, Chad, and Niger) security. There they constantly skirmish with the pro-Kaddafi Zwai. Another element of this rivalry is that the Tabu are black African while the Zwai are Arab. Kaddafi supported Arab domination over black Arabs, something many Arabs still support and black Africans resent. Add to the mix corruption and politics within the tribes and you get a southern border which is only sporadically guarded. Smugglers, illegal migrants, and terrorists can cross pretty much at will. On the better roads there are often multiple checkpoints, usually with one controlled by Tabu tribesmen, another run by some Zwai, and a third run by soldiers or police from the north. All will accept cash gratuities from travelers and turn away those they don’t like (for any number of reasons).

March 31, 2013: The military has been given $4.7 billion to rebuild the armed forces. Kaddafi spent a lot of money on the military but most of it was wasted because Kaddafi preferred to have incompetent and compliant men running the armed forces. A lot of high tech gear was purchased and never used. There was no one trained to maintain or, in some cases, even operate all these aircraft, ships, and tanks. The new government aims to change that, but first it must replace all the rusting Cold War era relics that Kaddafi used to arm the troops with. Military officials made it clear that they prefer Western equipment, not the Russian stuff that Kaddafi bought so much of.

April 1, 2013: An aide to the prime minister was kidnapped outside the capital. He was released eight days later and little has been revealed about the who and why.

April 2, 2013: Ten armed men stormed into a police station in the capital, tied up the five policemen on duty and freed three prisoners. The attackers were member of a local gang out to free three of their number who had been arrested. Criminal gangs like this are a growing problem that will have to be addressed after the militias are dealt with.

April 3, 2013: An explosion in an oil pipeline in the east was apparently sabotage and was quickly repaired. The culprit is still being sought.
April 15, 2013: In the east (near Derna, 200 kilometers east of Benghazi) the convoy of the leader of a local Islamic radical militia was ambushed. The militia leader was wounded. The Islamic radical militias in the area are under pressure from most of the locals to disband or get out.

April 17, 2013: A B-737 passenger jet was hit by gunfire (in the forward lavatory) as it landed in Tripoli airport. There were no injuries and it was later determined that the incident was accidental as it is customary to fire rifles in the air when celebrating something and the aircraft was over a neighborhood where there is a lot of that when the incident occurred.

April 20, 2013: After months of effort, negotiators got two feuding tribes in the deep south to agree on and sign a peace deal. This may end the fighting down there, but will not end ancient animosities. Kaddafi used tribal loyalties to maintain power and favored certain tribes and some of the pro-Kaddafi tribes kept fighting after Kaddafi died in 2011. The violence is not so much about putting Kaddafi followers back into power, but holding on to Kaddafi era privileges and avoiding punishment for crimes committed to support Kaddafi’s rule. In this case violence continued on the southern border where the pro-rebel Tabu tribesmen were put in charge of border (with Sudan, Chad and Niger) security. There they constantly skirmished with the pro-Kaddafi Zwai. Another element of this rivalry was that the Tabu are black African while the Zwai are Arab. Kaddafi supported Arab domination over black African Arabs, something many Arabs still support.

April 23, 2013: In the capital a car bomb went off near the French embassy and three people were injured. This was the first such attack since the assault on American diplomats in Benghazi last September.

April 26, 2013: In the east (Derna, 200 kilometers east of Benghazi) Islamic radicals attacked the headquarters of a pro-government militia, killing one man. A car bomb was found nearby and defused.

April 27, 2013: In the east (Benghazi) a bomb went off next to a police station, but there were no injuries.

April 28, 2013: Several hundred armed militiamen surrounded the foreign ministry compound in Tripoli and demanded that a law be passed barring anyone who worked for Kaddafi from holding a long list of government jobs. Such a law was proposed last December but has been stalled over the issue of what to do about Kaddafi officials who changed sides during the civil war and people who worked for Kaddafi but were not supporters of Kaddafi. The foreign ministry, like many other ministries, has some senior officials who changed sides during the war. There is an element of class, family and tribal envy here since during decades of Kaddafi rule educated or ambitious Libyans could either go into exile (which many did) or work for the government. Some supported Kaddafi’s ideas about a benevolent (in theory) dictatorship, most did not. Now Libyans are split on the issue of barring everyone who ever worked for Kaddafi (including those who quit and fled the country) from government employment. For many Libyans it’s all black and white and no compromise will be tolerated. But many of Libyans who could be banned are just the sort of educated and skilled people the country needs in government right now.

Weapons stolen from government warehouses two years ago are still being smuggled out of Libya and have shown up in at least twelve other countries so far. Most of the stuff gets out to the east (Egypt) or the south (the lightly guarded borders with Niger, Chad and Sudan). A lot of these weapons remain hidden inside Libya, where they are considered a valuable commodity that can be used for family defense or sold to other Libyans or smugglers to raise quick cash. Illegal weapons are common and the security forces won’t come after you about it unless you are using those weapons to commit another crime.
The government has given the new government of Egypt two billion dollars. As far as anyone can tell this is something of a gift, to a government desperate for cash because their economy has sharply declined since the Mubarak dictatorship was overthrown. It is believed the gift was intended to ensure that the Egyptian government remained cooperative. This includes making it difficult for weapons to be smuggled out of Libya and for opponents of the new Libyan government to set up shop in Egypt.

April 29, 2013: The government admits security remains a major problem in the country. Progress is being made but it is slow because the government wants to disarm or otherwise disable militias without triggering another civil war. The dozens of major militias know they are unpopular and are government and popular under pressure to disband. Most of these militias don’t agree with other groups but are united by the desire to stay in business (be it just stealing or Islamic terrorism). If the government comes on too strong many of these militias could unite and put up some serious resistance. More civil war is very unpopular among nearly all Libyans, especially now that the economy is reviving.

May 2, 2013: The U.S. revealed that their investigation into Libyan nuclear weapons efforts revealed evidence that North Korea supplied key materials and technology. This was made possible by Pakistani nuclear weapons developer A Q Khan, who originally stole technology from the West that enabled him to create Pakistan’s nuclear bombs. In 2004, Khan admitted that he had then sold that technology (as a private venture) to other nations (like Libya and North Korea). Outrage from the West over this led Khan to be placed under house arrest. But he was kept away from journalists and spared any prosecution. That was because he was a national hero in Pakistan for creating the "Islamic Bomb." Popular demand eventually led to Khan being released from house arrest four years ago.

May 3, 2013: In Tripoli several hundred anti-militia protestors demonstrated. This attracted some militiamen, who attacked the demonstrators.

May 5, 2013: Responding to weeks of pressure from Islamic radicals and militias, the legislature passed a law banning anyone who worked for Kaddafi from holding political office for the next ten years. Such a law was proposed last December but stalled over the issue of what to do about Kaddafi officials who changed sides during the civil war and people who worked for Kaddafi but were not supporters of Kaddafi. The foreign ministry, like many other ministries, has some senior officials who changed sides during the war. There is an element of class, family, and tribal envy here since during decades of Kaddafi rule educated or ambitious Libyans could either go into exile (which many did) or work for the government. Some supported Kaddafi’s ideas about a benevolent (in theory) dictatorship, most did not. After Kaddafi fell two years ago Libyans were split on the issue of barring everyone who ever worked for Kaddafi (including those who quit and fled the country) from government employment. For many Libyans it’s all black and white and no compromise will be tolerated. But many of Libyans who could be banned are just the sort of educated and skilled people the country needs in government right now. The group hardest hit by this is the National Forces Alliance, the coalition that controls the most seats in the legislature. The many officials forced out of office will not disappear and many will continue to influence national affairs as unofficial advisors to their successors.

May 8, 2013: Tunisia arrested a Libyan man at a southern port and seized 150 kg (330 pounds) of explosives on his fishing boat. This is the latest such incident as individuals from Libya continue trying
to smuggle weapons into Tunisia. Islamic radicals and gangsters are the customers for this stuff and so far the government has not found evidence of any organization behind the smuggling.

The U.S. announced it was withdrawing some of its diplomatic staff because of the growing threat of terrorist violence. This came a day after the U.S. warned citizens to not visit Libya because of the terrorist threat. Other Western nations have taken similar precautions.

May 10, 2013: There were two attacks on police stations in Benghazi early today. There were no casualties, just property damage. Later in the day there were anti-militia demonstrations in three cities.

May 11, 2013: A police station was attacked in Benghazi and damaged. One of the attackers was killed and the incident was apparently an act of revenge by someone angry at the police.

In neighboring Tunisia police broke up a large demonstration by Islamic radicals.

May 12, 2013: The militias besieging several ministries in the capital have finally withdrawn, several days after their main demand (a law barring Kaddafi era people from serving in government) was met. This allowed employees to return to work at the Foreign and Interior ministries.

May 13, 2013: A car exploded near a hospital in Benghazi, killing three people. Thought at first to be a car bomb, further investigation revealed that it was an accident, when explosives used for fishing accidentally detonated.

May 15, 2013: For the second time in the last six months, the Zueitina oil terminal (180 kilometers southwest of Benghazi) was shut down because demonstrators (demanding jobs or more money from the government) blocked access.

The U.S. FBI has identified 25 of the 45 people it has photos of attacking the American diplomatic compound in Benghazi last September. This left the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans dead. The FBI is seeking more information on three of the 45, apparently in the belief that they are leaders.

In neighboring Tunisia police and soldiers have been searching for about fifty Islamic terrorists who are operating in the Atlas Mountains near the Kasserine Pass. The search concentrated on a hundred square kilometers of sparsely populated forests and mountains without much success. Algerian border security in that area has been increased, in case the terrorists try to flee that way, and none are expected to head for Libya. This is the first time Tunisia has had to deal with armed Islamic terrorists since 2007. The armed men in the Atlas Mountains have been active in the area for at least six months. Some of these terrorists recently fled Mali and others are from Algeria. These were joined by a smaller group (a dozen or so) of Tunisian Islamic terrorists who had apparently not been active until joined by all these new men and a few local recruits. Because of this increase in violence, the moderate Islamic government of Tunisia has declared war on Islamic radicals, and these groups have responded by accepting the challenge and promising a lot more violence. Eleven of the 32 terrorists killed nearby in an attack on an Algerian natural gas field in January, were Tunisian, which provided a hint that there were a lot more Islamic terrorists in Tunisia than the government wanted to admit. That group had travelled through Libya to reach their target.

On the Egyptian border security personnel strive to keep weapons smugglers from getting into Egypt and Egyptians from illegally entering Libya looking for work. Some 4,000 Egyptians have tried that so far this year and they come by land and sea. It’s unknown how many weapons (stolen from government warehouses or troops during the revolution) have made it into Egypt. Every month several shipments are detected and seized.
May 17, 2013: Security remains a major problem in the country. Progress is being made but it is slow because the government wants to disarm or otherwise disable militias without triggering another civil war. The dozens of major militias know they are unpopular and are under government and popular pressure to disband. The growing number of anti-militia demonstrations is evidence of that. Most of these militias don’t agree with each other but are united by the desire to stay in business (be it just stealing or Islamic terrorism). If the government comes on too strong many of these militias could unite and put up some serious resistance. More civil war is very unpopular among nearly all Libyans, especially now that the economy is reviving. The government is training more police and some areas are organizing anti-militia defense volunteers. These could be called militias, except that they are led and staffed by people who are very hostile to the militia concept. Such local volunteer groups are common around the world when organized armed groups become intolerable.

May 18, 2013: In Tripoli a bomb went off near the Algerian, Greek, and Saudi embassies, causing only light damage to a car. In Benghazi another bomb went off, wounding a soldier.

May 19, 2013: In Benghazi officials have determined that an explosion outside a hospital last week was an accident, not a bomb.

May 20, 2013: The U.S. has identified five men involved in the attack in Benghazi last September that left the American ambassador and three other Americans dead. The Libyan government refuses to arrest the five because they are protected by powerful Islamic radical militias.

The Interior Minister resigned, largely because of his failure to get a new national police force organized and reduce the growing lawlessness.

May 21, 2013: In Benghazi soldiers arrested several men and seized over 200 anti-tank mines and bomb making materials. One soldier was wounded during the operation.

May 26, 2013: Niger is demanding that Libya do something about Islamic terrorist groups who have established bases in southern Libya. Niger believes that the men who carried out two recent terror attacks in Niger came from Libya. The Tuareg tribes in southern Libya are not particularly into Islamic radicalism but have been known to harbor Islamic terrorists if the money was right. It is believed that some of the Islamic terrorists from Mali eventually made their way to southern Libya because sanctuary was assured by tribes who stayed bought once you paid them.

The head of the national legislature (Mohammed Magarief ) is resigning because of the new law that bans any officials who once worked for the Kaddafi government. Magarief was very popular and had been opposed to Kaddafi for over two decades before the 2011 revolution.

May 28, 2013: The government has agreed (after much pressure from groups in eastern Libya) to move most operations of the national oil company from Tripoli to Benghazi. That will mean thousands of jobs for the east.

May 29, 2013: In Benghazi a roadside bomb killed three soldiers.

May 30, 2013: At an oilfield 1,000 kilometers southwest of the capital 45 security guards went on strike and halted pumping operations. The dispute was over late pay and poor living conditions. The oil field produces about five percent of Libya’s oil.

June 2, 2013: In the south ancient animosities between tribes left at least five dead and dozens wounded. Kaddafi used tribal loyalties to maintain power and favored certain tribes and some of the pro-Kaddafi tribes kept fighting after Kaddafi died in 2011. The violence is not so much about putting Kaddafi followers back into power but holding on to Kaddafi era privileges and avoiding punishment.
for crimes committed to support Kaddafi’s rule. In this case violence continued on the southern border where the pro-rebel Tabu tribesmen were put in charge of border (with Sudan, Chad, and Niger) security. There they constantly skirmished with the pro-Kaddafi Zwai. Another element of this rivalry was that the Tabu are black African, while the Zwai are Arabs. Kaddafi supported Arab domination over black African Arabs, something many Arabs still support.

June 8, 2013: In Benghazi a large crowd of civilians, many of them armed, surrounded a compound used by a militia and demanded that the militiamen get out of the neighborhood (where they had been acting like thugs). The militiamen resisted and a battle broke out. Nearly 150 people were killed or wounded and the surviving militiamen fled. The compound they were using was set on fire.

The head of the Libyan Army (Yusef al Mangoush) resigned, in response to yesterday’s battle against a militia in Benghazi. Mangoush was criticized for delays in forming a new army and for not intervening in yesterday’s Benghazi battle and refusing (because of government orders) to send any troops he did have to deal with the many instances of militia misbehavior.

June 9, 2013: On the Egyptian border eight Egyptians were wounded by Libyan border guards. It began when the Libyans caught four Egyptian merchants trying to sneak goods across (without paying the customs fee). The guards burned the truck and its cargo, and Egyptian police arrived and tried to intervene. That resulted in a gun battle that left four Egyptian smugglers and four Egyptian policemen wounded.

The Libyan Air Force is buying two American C-130J transporters.

Protests at various oil facilities have reduced daily production by 16 percent. Many of the tribes living near the oil facilities in the sparsely populated south have come to depend on oil industry jobs. In effect, having one of these jobs makes you a rich man because more traditional forms of employment pay far less. Thus, those without oil related jobs are becoming increasingly aggressive about demanding a piece of the pie. The government does not want to encourage tribesmen to think they can get a do-nothing (but high paying) job just by making threats. This makes many poor but ambitious tribesmen angry, more determined, and sometimes violent. There is some good news. The economy doubled in 2012 and is on track to grow another 20 percent this year. The growth is due to getting oil production going again, as oil is 90 percent of GDP and 97 percent of exports.

June 11, 2013: The recent militia-related violence in Benghazi has forced the government to agree to use force, when necessary, to disband illegal militias and to punish authorized militias that misbehave. For two years now the government has tolerated the militias because there were no organized police or military to deal with any violent opposition from these private armies. The recent upsurge in resistance, often instigated by armed civilians who were simply fed up with the gangster habits of many militias, has forced the government to act.

June 11, 2013: In the capital someone attached a bomb to the car of Italian diplomats. The bomb was spotted and people moved away before it exploded (wounding two children). Islamic terrorists were believed responsible.

June 14, 2013: South of the capital (near the town of Kira) pro-Kaddafi gunmen ambushed an army convoy and killed a colonel. Three of the attackers were killed by return fire.

June 15, 2013: In Benghazi six soldiers were killed during a battle with hostile militiamen.

In the eastern city of Derna a judge was shot dead by an assassin. The courts resumed operation in many parts of the country recently and anti-government and other criminal groups are trying to avoid prosecution by intimidating judges and prosecutors.
June 16, 2013: In southern Tunisia police arrested a Libyan Islamic terrorist leader who was part of a group of Islamic radicals operating in the Atlas Mountains near the Kasserine Pass since late last year.

June 19, 2013: A 3 AM bomb destroyed a police station in Benghazi. This was likely carried out by militiamen or gangsters trying to halt the growth of police capabilities (which are mainly directed at shutting down criminal gangs and anti-government militias).

The loss of oil income has nationwide implications because most Libyans rely on the oil revenue to support their living standards. Most Libyans want their Kaddafi-era welfare state back but bigger and better. Kaddafi held power for so long, despite his bizarre behavior and mismanagement, by spending over half the oil income on a shabby, but effective enough, welfare state. Anyone who misbehaved had their benefits cut off. Kaddafi would also cut benefits for the extended family of those who opposed him. This was a remarkably effective way to run a police state. With Kaddafi and his secret police gone, people still want their welfare state and not a shabby one either. But without control of the entire country and full oil production, the new government has no way to deliver the expected goodies. Then there’s the corruption, with many militia leaders inclined to grab local welfare funds for themselves. The new Libya is a work in progress and will probably continue to be one for some time.

Several demonstrations have blockaded oil fields and export terminals and cut oil production by a third. The demonstrators go after the oil facilities because that is sure to get the attention of the government and some action on their grievances. The complaints are usually economic and the solution is usually the government hiring more local men to work at the oil facilities. Deals are usually worked out and production resumed. The job disputes are often over who will be hired to provide security. Foreigners handle most of the technical jobs because few Libyans are qualified for this work. But security is another matter and rival militias battle each other and whoever the current oil field security people are to obtain these jobs.

The rebel militias are also attacking media outlets that disagree with them. While many of these rogue militias are turning into criminal gangs (a common historical phenomena worldwide) some are becoming allies with Islamic terror groups. A small number of the rebel militias were run by Islamic radicals and these have since become increasingly dangerous because these groups want to turn Libya into a religious dictatorship. Since Kaddafi was overthrown in 2011, Libya has turned into something of a sanctuary for Islamic terrorists. Not so much because the government allowed it, but more because the government could not prevent it. Benghazi was the largest urban area that was hospitable to Islamic terrorists, mainly because it was the last large city to have law and order restored by government security forces (and pro-government armed groups). That battle is still going on. Meanwhile in the south (away from the narrow “green” coastal area) the vast and thinly populated semi-desert and desert areas will not come under any government control for some time. In these badlands the Islamic terror groups can operate more freely. The terrorists are not invisible down there, they need supplies and visit nearby settlements to obtain what they require. Overhead the terrorists are vulnerable to air reconnaissance (via vidcams and electronic monitoring). The south is the next big battleground for a much longer war.

A month ago the government launched an offensive against dozens of troublesome militias and, not surprisingly, the main battleground has been Benghazi. There the militias are fighting back and the government has sent additional troops in to help police and pro-government militias maintain law and order. In reaction to this many militias with known anti-government attitudes have abandoned their compounds, gone underground, and begun fighting as terrorists against government security forces (police, soldiers, and pro-government militias and vigilantes). Some of the rebel militiamen believe that the new government is too close to members of the old Kaddafi government. This is
largely paranoia, but it is a popular delusion, especially when it justifies the increasingly criminal behavior (larceny and extortion) practiced by many militiamen. The militias now fear the population in general, which has become very hostile to the misbehaving former rebels. Many Libyan families have obtained weapons (assault rifles and pistols) during the rebellion two years ago and have recently shown a willingness to grab those weapons and turn on the hated militias. The government has called on neighborhoods to organize local defense units and cooperate with the security forces in halting the militia violence.

After the revolution two years ago, many of these weapons were stolen and ended up on the black market. These are showing up all over the region as smugglers get them out of Libya and to buyers who can pay. Most of the Kaddafi weapons hoard was seized by the new Libyan government (or pro-government militias that did not hand them over to the black market) and many of these are being sold to Gulf Arab states that are supplying them to Syrian rebels. The weapons shipments are technically illegal because of sanctions against Syria, but Turkey looks the other way as the arms are flown in or come by ship mixed in with relief supplies. Libyan arms dealers approved by the Libyan government are allowed to broker sales of weapons to approved buyers (mainly wealthy Arab oil states who back the Syrian rebels).

June 23, 2013: The late dictator Moamar Kaddafi loved to buy military equipment, and he did so constantly and in far larger quantities than Libya required or could even operate. Most of this stuff was never used. For decades there were thousands of armored vehicles and warplanes sitting around in remote bases with no one to maintain them. There were dozens of military bases with locked warehouses full of assault rifles, machine-guns, mortars, and portable missiles that were never issued or touched. Some of this stuff was shipped to other African countries, to arm local rebels that Kaddafi supported (usually against local leaders Kaddafi did not get along with).

June 25, 2013: South of Sirte unidentified gunmen attacked an army checkpoint and killed six soldiers. The coastal town of Sirte has a population of 100,000 and was Kaddafi's birthplace. Before 2011, it was full of his well-cared for Kaddafi supporters. Sirte was heavily damaged, and looted, during the rebellion. Most of the population fled the fighting, and when they returned they found a much less prosperous lifestyle. This caused some of the locals to arm themselves and misbehave.

June 27, 2013: The Defense Minister was dismissed, after troops under his command were unable to halt three days of terrorist and militia violence in the capital. The fighting and bombings left ten dead and dozens wounded.

July 5, 2013: In Benghazi someone fired on the car of the French consul, who was uninjured.

July 7, 2013: In Libya there were more anti-militia demonstrations. In the east the ports of Es Sider and Ras Lanuf were reopened, after security guards there halted their strike (for better working conditions) that had shut down the two oil shipping facilities for three days.

July 10, 2013: Security forces have regained control of the Interior Ministry compound in Tripoli. For a week (since July 2nd) angry militiamen had occupied the compound. The occupiers had objected to the disbanding of SSCs (Special Security Committees) at the end of last year. The first post Kaddafi government (the NTC) formed a national police called the SSC a year ago. Soon some 60,000-strong former militiamen (and some who fought for Kaddafi) joined SSCs. The pay was high and regular, but leadership was largely amateur. The SSC was not welcome in Misrata and Zintan and had its hands full dealing with independent militias in Tripoli and Benghazi. The SSCs were also trying to arrange an end to fighting between black African and Arab tribes around the southeastern town of Kufra. This had been going on for months and had left over 200 dead by mid-2012. Another source of violence, which the SSC has been less successful against, were Islamic radical groups in eastern Libya. Some of
these groups want to turn Libya into a religious dictatorship and declare war against the non-Moslem world. These Islamic radicals had already attacked Westerners in the area and were responsible for desecrating World War II era graves of Western soldiers. All this is a big embarrassment for the NTC, which knew it needed to work with the West (to sell the oil and import goods and services). At the same time, the NTC did not want the local Islamic radicals to declare war on the NTC. The SSC turned out to be incapable of dealing with the Islamic terror groups, and many SSC members were out for themselves, not the common good. In many parts of the country the SSC men were seen as government supported bandits, and by late 2012, the government decided to shut down SSC and move the most reliable SSC members over to the newly formed police force. This put many SSC members out of work and some of those men took over the Interior Ministry in an effort to get paid.

July 15, 2013: Oil production and shipping has resumed, after having been largely shut down since June 25th. There had been many disruptions in oil fields and export facilities last month, which cut average production to 1.3 million barrels a day. The disruptions were mainly caused by men demanding jobs or more money for their area of the country. These groups blocked oil facilities until they got what they wanted. Oil accounts for 70 percent of Libyan GDP and the government is eager to resume full production (3 million barrels a day).

July 16, 2013: The government is now fully committed to disbanding and disarming the remaining militias. The problem remains having the trained soldiers and police to actually make this happen. Meanwhile, the government is deadlocked over creating a new constitution. The government is forced to expend most of its energy on keeping the population (most of them dependent on government handouts) happy and non-violent. Many Libyans are more into entitlement than joining together for the common good. Decades of Kaddafi’s dictatorial welfare state had left many people incapable of forming and running a democratic government. This is what most Libyans want, but there is disagreement and uncertainty about how to go about it.

August 1, 2013: In the capital 18 prisoners escaped when the convoy taking them from a courthouse to prison was attacked.

In Benghazi a senior police commander was wounded when a bomb planted in his car went off.

August 2, 2013: In Benghazi a bomb was thrown at a police station, wounding five policemen.

August 3, 2013: The deputy prime minister resigned, citing lack of cooperation from senior government officials and rampant corruption that interfered with efforts to solve the security and economic problems.

August 4, 2013: The U.S. ordered its Middle Eastern embassies closed because of the threat of al Qaeda attack. This closure lasted until the 10th.

August 7, 2013: The U.S. government finally indicted someone (Ahmed Khattalah) for the attack on an American diplomatic facility in Benghazi last September 11. This killed the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans. Khattalah, an Islamic radical and militia leader, denied the charges. Khattalah has long been a suspect but Libyan security forces have not been able to arrest him.

August 13, 2013: Several thousand angry Berbers stormed the parliament demanding recognition and autonomy for them in the new constitution. About 90 percent of Libyans are Arabic-speakers of mixed Arab-Berber ancestry. Berbers who retain their ancient language and culture (and use the original name for Berbers, Amazigh) comprise only four percent and most of them live in small villages in the western hill country south of Tripoli. But about ten percent of Libyans consider themselves Berber and many of these live in the cities. While about 85 percent of Libya’s six million
people live along the coast, some five percent are still nomadic. Other minorities comprise about six percent of the population. Nearly 100 percent of the population speaks at least some Arabic and 97 percent are Sunni Moslems. The Berber are Sunni but were never big on Islamic radicalism. Kaddafi saw the Berbers as a threat because they were not Arab but had, for over a thousand years, resisted Arab domination. The Berber nationalists have also been holding demonstrations outside oil facilities in the West, interfering with oil production.

Shipments from the refinery at Ras Lanouf resumed. While the crude oil terminal is still held by strikers, the refinery terminal was shut down by its workers on July 29th and that strike was settled.

August 17, 2013: In Benghazi a bomb went off outside the Egyptian consulate, wounding a security guard and five children playing nearby.

August 18, 2013: The Interior Minister resigned, complaining of interference by the prime minister and other senior politicians. The Interior Minister, a former colonel in the Tripoli police, took the job last May after his predecessor was forced to resign, largely because of his failure to get a new national police force organized and reduce the growing lawlessness.

There has still been a lot of street violence in the last month, mostly between militias fighting each other and the security forces. Public opinion is decidedly anti-militia and that translates into support for the security forces or local vigilantes who will violently eject militiamen from the neighborhood. The government is deploying more army units, as they become available, to help keep the peace in the cities. The militia leaders know that their time is coming to an end and many are willing to go down fighting.

There’s been less Islamic terrorist activity this year, in large part because of popular anger (and often violent action) against the Islamic radical groups. But there are many (perhaps thousands) of these guys still around. There is less terrorist activity because many of the terrorists have gone into the countryside, which has led to persistent rumors (and some videos) showing terrorist training camps and operational bases in the far south. Many of the Islamic radicals who showed up two years ago for the revolution have since moved on to other battlefields (like Syria). Even many Libyan Islamic radicals have gone to Syria, while others have moved to neighboring Tunisia and especially Egypt. The government is recruiting and training new soldiers and police as quickly as it can, and nearly all these are sent to the cities, where most Libyans and unruly militias live.

Crime has increased since the 2011 revolution, in part because 14,000 convicts were able to flee their prisons during the fighting and have not been recaptured. Many of these men were in prison for serious offenses (murder, rape, kidnapping, grand theft, assault, fraud) and have gone back to doing what got them jailed in the first place. It is believed that the several dozen attacks on government officials and security personnel in the last few months were contract killings using some of the convicted killers who escaped in 2011.

The strikers get some sympathy for their anti-corruption demands. Libya is one of most corrupt nations in the world. International corruption surveys put Libya among the twenty most corrupt countries (out of 176 surveyed). Most Libyans agree with this but the corruption has been around for centuries and even Kaddafi had to live with it. So far, there have not been enough Libyans willing to step up and halt the practices.

August 19, 2013: The government has threatened the striking security personnel at the Brega, Zueitina, Ras Lanouf, and Sedra oil export terminals with army intervention if they do not surrender control of the facilities they have been occupying since July 25th. This has cost the country over $1.6 billion in lost oil sales. Other shutdowns this year have cost another $400 million in losses. The
government also issued a warning to all oil tanker companies that if any unauthorized (by the Libyan government) tankers tried to enter any of the terminals held by the strikers that ship would be fired on. This warning was necessary because the strikers were trying to sell some of the oil stored at the terminals to replace lost wages of the strikers and other workers there. The strikers are demanding higher pay and investigations into corruption (particularly how oil sales are being handled). The government has been reluctant to use force because of the risk that the strikers would damage the facilities, further delaying the resumption of shipments. In the meantime, there is less money for government benefits nearly all Libyans depend on. Those strikers don’t seem to realize that they are hurting all Libyans by interfering with the oil sales and that eventually creates a powerful public outcry demanding that the strikers be punished.

September 2, 2013: Daughter of Libya's former spy chief al-Senussi kidnapped

BBC News: The daughter of Libya's former intelligence chief has been abducted after leaving a prison in Tripoli. Justice Minister Salah al-Marghani said police had been escorting Anoud Abdullah al-Senussi from al-Rayoumi prison on Monday afternoon when they were ambushed by heavily armed gunmen. The kidnappers opened fire on them before seizing Ms Senussi, he added. Ms Senussi had just finished a 10-month prison sentence for entering Libya with a forged passport in October 2012. She was arrested after reportedly flying back to Libya to visit her father, Abdullah al-Senussi, in jail. Her father is being detained for his alleged role in crimes committed during the rule of Muammar Gaddafi. He is also wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which has accused him of responsibility for crimes against humanity during the uprising that ousted Gaddafi in 2011. Judicial police officers were escorting Ms Senussi to Tripoli’s airport to board a flight with relatives to the southern city of Sebha when their convoy was ambushed, Mr Mirghani said. "The convoy was ambushed by five vehicles. [The gunmen] were armed to the teeth and started firing their weapons, but it quickly became clear that they wanted to take her. No-one was injured. "The incident took place about 50m away from the gate of the prison." Mr Marghani appealed for "hints" about the incident, and said he expected everyone, particularly "revolutionaries" to help find Ms Senussi. In recent months, she was granted a visit to her father. The BBC's correspondent in Tripoli says the latest kidnapping may well reinforce the ICC's argument that Libya is not ready to prosecute high-profile cases like that of Abdullah al-Senussi and Saif Gaddafi, both wanted by The Hague. The central government's lack of control over various armed groups driven by a myriad of agendas has contributed to lax security, our correspondent adds.

September 5, 2013: Updated - The SSC (Supreme Security Committee) admitted that its own police had ambushed a police convoy taking the recently freed Anoud al Senussi (daughter of Kaddafi's chief of intelligence and currently being prosecuted for war crimes). The 22 year old Anoud al Senussi issued a statement that she was under the protection of the SSC, which was keeping her safe from enemies of her father. Anoud al Senussi had originally been imprisoned nearly a year ago for entering the country illegally (apparently to see her father). In neighboring Tunisia, police cornered 4 Islamic terrorists in the capital. There was a gun battle that left 2 terrorists dead and 2 arrested. The 4 terrorists were believed involved in recent assassinations of politicians and in touch with a group of Islamic terrorists hiding out in the Atlas Mountains near the Algerian border.

September 8, 2013: Police have broken up a terrorist organization that was recruiting young men to be Islamic terrorists and smuggling them to training camps in neighboring Tunisia. The police arrested 21 people involved with this effort, all but 1 of them Libyans.

September 11, 2013: In Benghazi a bomb exploded outside the abandoned (since an attack last September that killed the U.S. ambassador) American consulate. There were no fatalities from the explosion, which blew a hole in the compound wall.
September 12, 2013: The government is sending 8,000 soldiers to be trained by the U.S. in a
Bulgarian military facility. These will be sent in batches of about 200 troops and the process will take
up to 8 years.

Tunisian forces have been searching for a group of at least 30 Islamic terrorists but have only
encountered them a few times since January in the Atlas Mountains near the Algerian border. The
terrorists have staged some bombings and ambushes but have apparently devoted most of their
efforts to not getting found. Algeria fears that if the Tunisian forces get too close the Islamic
terrorists will try to escape via Algeria. Some of the Tunisian terrorists are believed to have been men
who were in northern Mali and fled the French-led January offensive. On Tunisia’s Algerian border
12,000 additional Algerian troops have appeared over the last four months. Sixty new outposts and
small bases were established on the Algerian side and have apparently succeeded in preventing any
of the Islamic terrorists active just across the border from entering Algeria. Libya has no such
improved security and there is still a lot of smuggling (especially of weapons and Islamic terrorists) in
and out of Tunisia.

Next door Tunisia is suffering a popular backlash by the moderate majority against a government
controlled by Islamic parties (who were better organized for the post revolutions than their more
numerous secular opponents). Unlike Egypt, where the Islamic parties tried to rule alone (and
created fear that religious was going to be imposed), the Tunisian religious parties created a coalition
with secular parties, shared power, and did not threaten to impose religious rule. But there have still
been lots of anti-government demonstrations, triggered by the assassination of several popular
secular politicians this year and the sense that the Islamic government was not as enthusiastic as it
should be in going after the few hundred Islamic terrorists active in the country. In response, the
government has turned up the heat on Islamic radicals and found that many of them did support
Islamic terrorists. Many Islamic conservatives still want a constitution that emphasizes Islamic values
and customs. Unlike many other Arab countries, many Tunisian Islamic conservatives have been
willing to compromise, which may prevent violent conflict, as in Egypt, between religious and secular
groups. Tunisians are not yet convinced that Tunisian religious conservatives will compromise
enough, but both sides are still negotiating.

The government has issued a warning to all oil tanker that if any companies unauthorized (by the
Libyan government) tankers tried to enter any of the terminals held by the strikers they will be fired
on. This is to prevent strikers from selling oil stored at the terminals to replace lost wages. Even the
strikers realize you can’t eat oil. The strikers have numerous demands, including higher pay, more
control over the oil industry for local tribes and investigations into corruption (particularly how oil
sales are being handled) as well as autonomy for some parts of the country (especially the east,
centered on Benghazi). In the meantime there is less money for government benefits nearly all
Libyans depend on. Those strikers don’t seem to care that they are hurting all Libyans by interfering
with the oil sales and that eventually creates a powerful public outcry demanding that the strikers be
punished. The strikers get some sympathy for their anti-corruption demands. Libya is one of the most
corrupt nations in the world. International corruption surveys put Libya among the twenty most
corrupt countries (out of 176 surveyed). Most Libyans agree with this, but the corruption has been
around for centuries and even Kaddafi had to live with it. So far, there have not been enough Libyans
willing to step up and halt the practices.

Various tribes and militias are still blocking the eastern oil terminals, halting over 60 percent of oil
exports. Normally Libya sells about 1.5 million barrels a day. But most oil export terminals have been
occupied since July 25th and that has reduced shipments to about 200,000 barrels a day. With the
western oil terminals now open again that should rise to about 500,000 barrels a day by the end of
the month. But all this is costing the government nearly a billion dollars a week in lost revenue. Eventually the government will not be able to pay security personnel and the oil supported government welfare system will collapse. This will cause chaos and the government resists calls for the use of force because that could result in major damage to oil facilities that could take months, or longer, to repair. All this was largely unexpected because at the start of the year oil production was at 1.4 million barrels a day and nearly back to normal. Then some of the militias the government had hired to provide security at oil facilities decided their loyalties were more to themselves than the national government. Oil production accounts for over 70 percent of GDP and the government is running out of credit and will soon have no way to pay for essential imports, like food. Because the refineries that provide fuel for Libyans are also shut down, the government has to spend scarce cash to import fuel. That won’t last long because the government will have run out of cash and credit by the end of the year. After that the economy will collapse and with that food and other essentials will not be available for most Libyans. Before that happens, force will be the only option, as starvation is the last thing anyone wants.

Although there is a national government, that government is not united or coordinated. For example, the Defense Ministry has its own program to disband militias which is separate from a similar effort run by the Interior Ministry (which controls the national police). There is a plan for the two ministries to coordinate their efforts but it has not been implemented yet. There are many other examples of government organizations operating independently, which is why the many weapons stockpiled by the Kaddafi government are still being flown to Syria to supply rebel groups. These weapons are apparently being paid for (by pro-rebel Arab governments) but it is unclear who is getting the money. Technically, such exports are illegal by Libyan and international law but they continue. Meanwhile, the effort to destroy Libya’s chemical weapons stockpiles, begun in 2003 by Kaddafi, is stalled. That destruction was originally planned to take until 2016.

September 18, 2013: In the southwest a week of fighting between Zintan and Garamna tribal militias have left at least a dozen dead and over twenty wounded. There are similar tensions all over the country, but they usually don’t get past shouting, threats, and weapons fired into the air. Many parts of the country depend on local militias for law and order. These militias often cooperate with local governments or tribal leaders and have some legitimacy. Militias are less likely to cooperate with each other.

September 19, 2013: Saif al-Islam Quadhafi transfer for Tripoli hearing blocked’

The militia holding Saif al-Islam, the son of late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, has refused to transfer him to the capital for a pre-trial hearing. "The security situation does not permit his transfer," Zintan militia head Ajami al-Ateri told. Libya’s attorney general said he had ordered that Saif al-Islam be present at the Tripoli hearing.

September 26, 2013: Hot on the trail of Muammar Quadhafi’s loot'

The American firm Command Global Services (CGS) that Tripoli has retained to trace the foreign assets of Muammar Quadhafi has set up its operations in the Tremoille hotel in the 8th district of Paris. CGS’ investigators, headed by Charles Seidel, a former Central Intelligence Agency operative, will be collecting evidence in the French capital until September.

September 29, 2013: In Benghazi three soldiers and three policemen were killed in separate incidents.
September 30, 2013: In the west armed Berbers shut down a major natural gas pipeline to publicize Berber fears that they would remain a persecuted minority when the new constitution goes into force. Specifically, the protestors wanted Berber included as one of the official languages.

October 2, 2013: An armed mob attacked the Russian embassy. At least one of the attackers were killed but all embassy staff got away safely. The mob attacked because a Russian woman (a 26 year old professional weight lifter who came to Libya in 2011, to help defend the dictatorship) had murdered a Libyan pilot and his mother. The mob believed she was hiding out in the embassy. She wasn’t. The Libyan government apologized for the attack and promised to improve security around all embassies.

October 3, 2013: Russian embassy staff left the country.

October 3, 2013: LIBYA - Oil falls victim to tribal quarrels’

MC - The blockade of Libya’s oil facilities, initially driven by “wage” demands by former rebels in charge of protecting them, is now complicated by tribal factors. The government’s powerlessness in responding to Ibrahim Al-Jadhran whose men have been blocking the Es Sider, Ras Lanuf, Zuweitina and Marsa Al Hariga oil terminals since the end of July, can be explained by the fact he belongs to the Mgharba tribe.

Southeast of Tripoli (Bani Wali d) gunmen attacked a checkpoint and killed 16 soldiers. The next day police arrested two men and accused them of participating in the attack.

October 5, 2013: In Tripoli American Delta Force commandos covertly came ashore and arrested an al Qaeda leader (Nazih Abdul Hamed al Ruqai) long sought for his role in planning two terrorist attacks on American embassies in East Africa in 1998. Ruqai is a Libyan who returned in 2011, to take part in the revolution and has since lived openly, but quietly, in Tripoli. The Libyan government complained to the United States about this “kidnapping,” but the U.S. did not believe the Libyan government would, or even could, extradite Ruqai for his terrorist crimes. Ruqai is believed to have hidden out in Iran for over a decade. He is one of the few senior al Qaeda people still on the loose. Ruqai was noted for his technical skills (especially with computers) and ability to plan major terrorist operations. He is being interrogated aboard a U.S. Navy ship off the Libyan coast and will eventually be sent back to the United States for trial. He was indicted for mass murder and other crimes over a decade ago. Since then more unfavorable evidence against him has appeared. Many Libyans are glad to see men like Ruqai taken away, but the government is making a show of anger in an effort to appease Islamic radical groups angry over the inability of the Libyan government to prevent American commandos from just coming in and taking wanted (in the West) terrorists. The Libyan government hopes there are not more of these visits because many Islamic radicals are calling for attacks on government officials, if only to encourage the government to keep the Americans out.

About 600 people a day are illegally crossing the southern border in an effort to make it to Europe. This is more of a problem for Europeans than Libyans, who see the largely black African illegals as a nuisance, mainly because the migrants are just passing through. These travelers don’t want to stay in Libya, which is generally very hostile to these unwanted visitors. The illegals are easy to spot and the locals will sometimes murder migrants who cause any problems.

Libya still has not destroyed all the chemical weapons it began getting rid of 9 years ago. At least these weapons are now guarded, and many of them are so old and decrepit that any terrorists trying to move them would probably die while doing so (as the corroded containers broke and released the poisonous substances).
An example of the rampant crime is the recent admission that dozens of American armored vehicles and hundreds of weapons brought in as part of a training operation have been stolen. Most Libyans just want peace and safety so they can enjoy their oil wealth. That simple goal is proving harder to achieve than originally thought.

There is no quick solution to the warlord problem. The government has to build its military and police forces as quickly as it can and then take down the hundreds of armed gangs one at a time. At the current rate this could take 5 years or more. There is also the risk that many of these groups will unite to halt the pacification efforts and that would create another civil war.

October 7, 2013: Oil production is slowly resuming and is believed at 40 percent of full (1.6 million barrels a day) production. There are still many armed groups determined to interrupt oil production in order to obtain one concession or another from the government. The inability of the government to control all these armed groups has left the country generally lawless and suffering from a high crime rate. Vigilante groups are becoming more common. This has resulted in more private jails and summary punishment of those accused of crimes. The UN is complaining about illegal prisoners held by militias and being mistreated. There are 8,000 prisoners in government prisons. Illegal prisons are a minor problem compared to the general lack of law and order in most of the country. There is general support for this informal justice system, but Libyans would prefer government control of the streets and a proper judicial system.

October 7, 2013: US raids in Africa show the United States is pressuring al Qaeda, officials’

TRIPOLI (Reuters) - US Navy SEALS stormed ashore into the al Shabaab stronghold of Barawe but, a U.S. official told, they failed to capture or kill the target among the Somali allies of al Qaeda. U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, told Reuters the target was a Kenyan of Somali origin known by the name Ikrima, described as a foreign fighter commander for al-Shabaab in Somalia. One of the officials said it was not known if Ikrima was connected to last month's attack on Westgate mall in Nairobi by al Shabaab gunmen in which at least 67 people were killed.

October 9, 2013: The government admitted that it has given the U.S. permission to go after suspects in last years' attack on the Benghazi compound, where the American ambassador was staying. The attackers killed the ambassador and the Libyan government has been unable to arrest the men who are in Libya and are known to have participated. It is believed that similar unofficial permission was given to go after Nazih Abdul Hamed al Ruqai (also known as Abu Anas al Libi) on the 5th, using American commandos to grab Ruqai in front of his house and take him back to the U.S. for prosecution.

October 10, 2013: Libyan PM has been seized for hours by armed men in the capital, Tripoli’ In the capital some armed militiamen kidnapped the prime minister from the hotel he is living in. A few hours later militiamen loyal to the government forced the kidnappers to free the prime minister (who accused his kidnappers of trying to stage a coup).

Side note: The BBC News reports that Mr Zeidan Ali was taken from his hotel before dawn "by gunmen to an unknown place for unknown reasons", said a government statement. A former rebel group loosely allied to the government said it had arrested him following a prosecutor's warrant. The government has denied this. The government has been under pressure after US commandos seized senior al-Qaeda suspect Anas al-Liby in Libya. Mr Liby was snatched on Saturday in Tripoli. He is wanted in the US over the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. On Monday, Libya demanded an explanation from the US ambassador over the incident. The government is also struggling to contain rival tribal militias and Islamist militants who control parts of the country, two years after the revolt which overthrew Muammar Gaddafi.
Cabinet summoned - The BBC's Rana Jawad, in Tripoli, says the details of Mr Zeidan's capture remain unclear, but that he was taken by armed men from a hotel he resides in the early hours of the morning. Al-Arabiya TV station broadcast images which showed Mr Zeidan looking dishevelled and being escorted by what the station said were armed men. The government website said he had been taken "to an unknown place for unknown reasons by a group thought to be from the Tripoli Revolutionaries Control Room and the Committee for Fighting Crime". The government statement did not name the hotel, but a woman at the Corinthia Hotel - where the prime minister lives - confirmed the incident happened there when armed men entered the building. She said no-one had been killed. Our correspondent says there are a number of militia groups operating in Libya which are nominally attached to government ministries but often act independently. One of them - the Operations Cell of Revolutionaries - said it was acting on the orders of the prosecutor general in accordance with Libya's penal code. However, state-run National Libyan TV quoted Justice Minister Salah al-Marghani as saying that the prosecutor general had issued no such order. Libya's cabinet has been summoned for an immediate meeting under the leadership of the deputy prime minister. UK Foreign Secretary William Hague condemned the capture and called for Mr Zeidan's immediate release. "It is vital that the process of political transition in Libya is maintained. The government and people of Libya have our full support at this concerning time," he said.

Act of sabotage - In an interview with the BBC on Monday, Mr Zeidan had said Libya was being used as a base to export weapons throughout the region, and called on the West to help stop militancy in Libya. Last month Mr Zeidan visited the UK and appealed for British help to remove weapons from the country amid fears of increased arms smuggling to Syria. In April he urged Libyans to back their government in the face of "people who want to destabilise the country". He also complained at that time of other attacks and "acts of sabotage" carried out by separate groups, against the interior ministry and national TV headquarters.

Prime Minister Ali Zeidan was released by his militia kidnappers after a few hours. Ali Zeidan was elected as Libyan prime minister in October 2012, just weeks after failing to secure the chairmanship of the Libyan parliament, the General National Congress (GNC).

October 11, 2013: In Benghazi a car bomb went off near the Swedish and Finnish consulates, but there were no casualties.

October 11, 2013: LIBYA - PM Zeidan's brief kidnap was 'attempted coup'

Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan has said his brief kidnap this week was an "attempted coup", blaming his political opponents for the attack. In a TV address to the nation, he said an unnamed political party in the congress was behind the abduction. Ali Zeidan was seized from a Tripoli hotel on Thursday and held for several hours by armed militiamen. He praised the armed groups that came to rescue him and later called for calm in the increasingly lawless country.

October 11, 2013: LIBYA - Quadhafi era spy chief al-Senussi to be tried in Libya'

The International Criminal Court (ICC) has ruled that Libya's Gaddafi-era intelligence chief, Abdullah al-Senussi, can be tried in Libya. The decision means that the ICC will no longer demand that Mr Senussi be sent to The Hague to stand trial. The former military intelligence boss was indicted by the ICC in 2011 for war crimes allegedly committed during the uprising against Colonel Gaddafi. Mr Senussi was extradited to Libya from Mauritania last year. The ICC does not carry out proceedings against a suspect if it deems they are receiving a fair trial in a domestic court. A pre-trial chamber at the ICC decided that "Libya is willing and able genuinely to carry out" investigations into Mr Senussi, the court said in a statement.
October 13, 2013: In Benghazi gunmen killed a Libyan air force officer, while a commander of a police anti-drug operation was badly wounded when a bomb in his car went off.

October 14, 2013: In the coastal city of Sirte (midway between Tripoli and Benghazi) 7 Islamic terrorists died in an explosion. It’s unclear if someone killed them or they died while building a bomb.

October 18, 2013: In Benghazi gunmen killed Ahmed al Barghathi, the head of the military police. Barghathi had been supervising operations against rebel militias and the militias are responding by assassinating the leaders of efforts to disband them.

October 20, 2013: A militia near the Egyptian border agreed to release 70 Egyptian trucks and 200 Egyptians that they had seized a week earlier. Some militia members had kin jailed in Egypt for smuggling and thought kidnapping Egyptians would force the Egyptian government to set free the smugglers. Egypt refused and negotiated with tribal leaders to get the trucks and Egyptians released.

October 21, 2013: NATO has agreed to set up a small (fewer than 10 personnel) advisory team in Libya. The Libyan government first asked for this in May, but NATO is a bureaucracy and things take time.

October 22, 2013: Some former rebels, crippled during the fighting two years ago, broke into parliament and caused some damage. The vandals had been demonstrating outside parliament for more benefits. Demanding more from the government (which controls all the oil income) is a popular activity with many groups.

October 23, 2013: In neighboring Tunisia 6 policemen were killed while fighting Islamic terrorists south of the capital. Tunisia blames some of its Islamic terrorist problems on a lack of law and order in Libya and the ability of the Islamic terrorists to bring in weapons stolen from Kaddafi era armories. Islamic terrorists also maintain bases in the south, especially the southeast near the Niger border. These are the bases that can send terrorists into neighboring Algeria or straight north to Tunisia. The Algerian border is well guarded so many terrorists head for Tunisia where they have established bases in the Atlas Mountains near the Mediterranean coast. Tunisian soldiers and police have been searching for these bases all this year, without much success.

In Benghazi the air force officer in charge of air traffic control at the local air base was murdered as he left his home.

The Algerian government revealed that its troops had discovered a huge arms cache near the Libyan border. The cache contained hundreds of portable anti-aircraft missiles, rockets, and landmines.

October 25, 2013: In the east a coalition of warlord and tribal militias has declared independence from Libya and established a new country called Barqa. It has four provinces (Benghazi, Tobruk, Adjabiya, and Jebel Akhdar) but does not have loyal gunmen in most of the region claimed and has many armed opponents. In effect, a number of the eastern militias have dared the government to come and disarm them or tolerate these easterners running their own government and selling oil. At present the government controls a naval force that can blockade the oil export terminals and prevent any rebel militias from selling oil by sea. The government still has control of the border crossings, or can contest it with militias. This limits how much oil can be smuggled out via truck. Oil is valuable but bulky. A ton of oil sells for about $700 and oil tanker trucks can carry 10-30 tons of it. The larger trucks are tractor trailers and not very good at cross country travel. Thus the rebellions eastern tribes can control the oil but they can’t sell much of it themselves as long as the navy remains loyal.
Oil production is still only about 40 percent of the normal 1.4 million barrels a day. That is because local militias are still blocking shipment of oil produced in eastern Libya.

Under pressure from European countries the government has said it will try to halt the large number of African migrants coming to Libya then paying smugglers to get them to Europe, where they can claim asylum and greatly improve their economic situation. Over 500 people a day are illegally crossing the southern border in an effort to make it to Europe. This is more of a problem for Europeans than Libyans, who see the largely black African illegals as a nuisance, mainly because the migrants are just passing through. These travelers don’t want to stay in Libya, which is generally very hostile to these unwanted visitors. The illegals are easy to spot and the locals will sometimes murder migrants who cause any problems. Stopping them from getting into Libya is not easily done because the southern border is largely desert that smugglers have been getting across easily for generations.

Checkpoints on the few roads headed north are subject to bribes or simply going around. Worse, many of the tribes that long supported the dead dictator Kaddafi still oppose the new government and want the Kaddafi family back in charge. These tribes prospered under Kaddafi rule because the dictator favored these tribes when it came to jobs and economic opportunities. That is all gone now, and the pro-Kaddafi tribes are not happy about it. The tribes in eastern Libya were always the most hostile to Kaddafi and they want “compensation” for that in the form of a large share of the oil income. How to divide this oil income is a sensitive topic for everyone. The rampant corruption (which Kaddafi tolerated, as long as he was obeyed) was never popular and has proven difficult to bring under control. It’s hard to be fair dispensing the oil income if so many people are trying to steal it.

October 26, 2013: The government admits that it still does not have sufficient security forces to control the entire country and progress disarming the armed militias is very slow. There are over 220,000 armed Libyans who have registered with the government and receive a salary but largely answer to local militia leaders and not the central government. There is no quick solution to the warlord problem. The government has to build its military and police forces as quickly as it can and then take down the hundreds of armed gangs one at a time. At the current rate, this could take five years or more. There is also the risk that many of these groups will unite to halt the pacification efforts and that would create another civil war. That is already happening in eastern Libya.

November 13, 2013: Berber protestors who halted operations in a gas and oil exporting facility 100 kilometers west of the capital have also halted gas for electrical power plants, and the government is trying to deal with that before there are widespread blackouts.

November 14, 2013: In Benghazi an army officer and a retired air force officer were killed in two separate incidents.

The U.S. revealed that since January it has been quietly offering a $10 million reward for information about who was involved in the September 11, 2012 attack on American diplomats in Benghazi.

November 15, 2013: In the capital several thousand protestors marched on a military base occupied by a militia from Misrata. Some of the militiamen fired on the unarmed demonstrators. Police and soldiers got involved, and before it was all over two days later at least 47 were dead and more than 500 wounded. Public anger towards the militias has been on the increase this month because, since November 5th, there has been almost daily fighting between rival militias.

November 16, 2013: A general strike was declared in the capital and most businesses, with the exception of bakeries, pharmacies, hospitals, and gas stations, are closed. This strike is to continue until the militias are all out of Tripoli. Meanwhile, soldiers and pro-government militiamen attacked a
militia base. While most of the defending militiamen fled, four were killed and over a dozen wounded during the fighting. Elsewhere in the city members of the Misrata militia attacked an army base and looted it.

November 17, 2013: A senior intelligence officer was kidnapped in the capital.

November 18, 2013: Thousands of soldiers entered the capital to help persuade the militias to leave Tripoli. Crowds cheered the entry of the troops and the public is now openly hostile to the militias.

November 19, 2013: The government said it was going to move all the militias out of the capital, and this time it appears the effort may succeed. The militias are increasingly unpopular and now the government has sufficient troops and police to destroy any single militia that dares to resist. The militias have never cooperated with each other much and now is no different. The government is taking a census of the militias in Tripoli and plans to move them all so none are closer than 30 kilometers from the city. By offering to move, rather than disband, the militias, the government is getting cooperation from many of the militias. Those few that refuse to cooperate will be attacked.

November 20, 2013: In the southern city of Sabha gunmen stole $1,260,000 from a truck transporting the cash to a local bank. Meanwhile, police have identified who stole $54 million on October 28th (near the eastern city of Sirte) and are negotiating to get it back.

November 21, 2013: Several militias, under growing pressure, packed their gear and left the capital. The public pressure, the presence of more soldiers, and a general strike in the capital is forcing the militias to get out.

November 22, 2013: In the capital over 7,000 people turned out to continue protesting against the remaining militias.

November 23, 2013: In the eastern town of Derna, two gunmen shot dead a former member of the Kaddafi era secret police. Elsewhere a visiting Iraqi professor in the town was kidnapped, and later a video appeared on the Internet announcing his death because he was Shia. Sunni Islamic terrorists in Derna have been increasingly violent lately.

November 25, 2013: In Benghazi troops launched an attack on the base of the Islamic terrorist Ansar Al Sharia militia. This fighting left seven dead and over 60 wounded. This was the first time the army had attacked Ansar Al Sharia and that was largely because most people in Benghazi want the militias gone.

November 26, 2013: The bodies of two soldiers were found outside the eastern town of Derna.

In Benghazi someone fired on a checkpoint and wounded three soldiers. Earlier in the day three soldiers were killed when troops clashed with Islamic terrorist militiamen. Another soldier was shot dead as he left a café.

November 28, 2013: Over 40 people were killed or wounded in the south (640 kilometers from the capital at an airbase outside Sabha) as some 50 looters swarmed into an ammunition storage area. Someone mishandled something that exploded and the subsequent fire caused more explosions.

Most of the militias have been forced or persuaded to leave the capital. Over the last six months the government disbanded (or at least neutralized) the 40,000 armed militia men who fought in the 2011 revolution and became the local government after the Kaddafi era administration was destroyed. There were about 250 militias, usually based on clan, tribe, or neighborhood ties and led by local leaders. Many were simply local defense units that continued in that function in the lawless and sometimes chaotic months after Kaddafi era soldiers, police, and secret police were killed or driven
away (or just went into hiding). Some of the militias had other agendas and some of them were pro-Kaddafi. Many were led by Islamic radicals and had many foreign terrorists in their ranks. Others were led by men who wanted to form a new Libyan government, but these were outnumbered. In the cities, especially Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, and Ziltan, a brutal competition took place over the last two years, as the more powerful militias destroyed or absorbed the weaker ones and either joined the security forces of the new national government or continued to be hostile to outside control and sought to maintain their independence. This was especially true of tribal militias in remote areas and those in the east (especially Benghazi). It has been increasingly common for men who had not fought in the revolution to join militias to replace rebel fighters who have found work or gotten tired of the militia life. This meant that the militias were increasingly becoming criminal gangs, and that made the public even more hostile to these groups.

November 30, 2013: As predicted, for several months the government is warning the population that government pay and benefits will soon sharply decrease because disruption to oil exports has cut government income by 80 percent. That’s because 96 percent of government income comes from the export of oil. The government is short some $55 billion and is unable to borrow any more to cover the missing income. Most of the population depends on government payments to live and nearly everyone gets something. This was how the Kaddafi dictatorship remained in power for so long, by sharing the wealth. Post revolution efforts to grab control of oil facilities to extort more money from the government has shut down most oil exports. The government refuses to give in to the extortion demands and is reluctant to attack the occupiers lest the facilities be damaged severely. It could take months or, in some cases, years to repair the damage.

November 30, 2013: In the southern city of Sabha at least 40 escaped from a prison that was attacked by dozens of armed men.

December 1, 2013: In Benghazi (eastern Libya) an air force officer was shot dead.

December 2, 2013: In Benghazi and Derna (eastern Libya) Islamic terrorists fired on demonstrators calling for the Islamic terrorists to disband or leave the cities. Several dozen civilians were wounded. Security forces have put more pressure on Islamic terrorists in both cities over the last week, and that has led to over 60 casualties including at least nine dead.

December 5, 2013: An American teacher was shot dead while out jogging. Local Islamic terrorists accused the teacher of being a CIA spy but his students and Libyan colleagues thought highly of him. The government increased security for foreigners as a result of this killing.

December 7, 2013: In Benghazi (eastern Libya) a police colonel was killed by a bomb planted in his car by Islamic terrorists. The colonel was also a preacher at a local mosque and spoke out against Islamic terrorists.

December 8, 2013: In Benghazi (eastern Libya) a suicide car bomber attacked the funeral of an army officer assassinated by terrorists and wounded two people.

December 10, 2013: In Derna (eastern Libya) a colonel in security forces was shot dead outside his home. Elsewhere in the city a bomb destroyed a school. Islamic terrorists are hostile to non-religious schools and are active in Derna.

December 15, 2013: In Benghazi (eastern Libya) an army colonel was shot dead. Elsewhere in the city three soldiers were wounded by a roadside bomb.
December 16, 2013: Army special operations troops attacked the homes of known Islamic terrorists in retaliation for the recent death of a fellow soldier by a terrorist bomb. The fighting between Islamic terrorists and the growing number of army units sent in is increasing.

December 17, 2013: The UN is threatening to pull out of Libya because the government changed its mind and now refuses to allow the UN to bring in 235 foreign troops to guard the 200 UN staff in Libya. Some Libyan politicians denounced the UN request as outside interference. It was the lack of professional security forces that got the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans killed last September and terrorist attacks since then have killed and injured more foreigners.

December 20, 2013: In Derna (eastern Libya) the colonel in charge of military intelligence for Benghazi was murdered while in town to visit family.

International corruption surveys (Transparency International) show that corruption has increased in Libya since the Kaddafi government (which was infamous for its corruption) was overthrown. Corruption is measured on a 1 (most corrupt) to 100 (not corrupt scale). The three most corrupt nations have a rating of 8 and the least corrupt is 91. In the last year Libya has gone from 21 to 15. The Middle East averages 37 against the world average (for 177 countries) of 43. Corruption tends to increase during revolutions and civil wars.

The money shortage means a lot of rebuilding is not being done because there is no money to pay for construction materials and other supplies. There is also no money to rebuild the coast guard, so smugglers have an easier time moving people and goods in and out of the country. This includes drugs, Islamic terrorists, cash and Africans trying to get into Europe illegally.

The oil blockade has cost the government $7.5 billion so far and cash reserves and borrowing ability are running out. In addition to food and other essential imports, the government also has to import oil and refined petroleum products to supply its refineries and civilian demand. Even Islamic terrorist militias are calling for an end to the oil export blockades. But the Islamic terrorists also want the elected government eliminated and replaced with a religious dictatorship. That is not likely to happen because there are several major Islamic terrorist militias that do not agree with each other on how a religious dictatorship would work. This is a common problem with Islamic terrorists and their desire to replace government.

In the east (Benghazi and Derna) some Islamic terrorist groups still operate openly and others have established bases and training facilities out in the countryside. These Islamic terrorist groups are training foreigners, including men from Syria and poor security at the border and the airport makes it possible for known Islamic terrorists to enter and leave Libya without interference.

The government effort to neutralize the militias has not worked out as planned. While popular opposition to the militias and a growth in the number of trained and reliable army and police personnel have gotten most of the anti-government militias out of the major cities, these militias have not been destroyed. Most have simply moved to the countryside and still have members operating in the cities. This means continuing attacks on government officials and terrorism attacks in general.

December 21, 2013: The leader of the militia blockading the eastern oil export terminals now refuses to lift the blockade until the government recognizes the autonomy of eastern Libya and the right to take most of the income from oil in the east (where most of the oil is). The national parliament is calling on the government to stop trying to negotiate a settlement and use the security forces to take back control of the oil export terminals. But this is certain to damage the terminals and further delay the resumption of exports (by weeks, months or longer depending on the degree of damage). There
is also doubt that the security forces are up to the job. The army and police are still outnumbered by militia gunmen nationwide and a major battle for the oil export terminals would reduce operations against hostile militias elsewhere.

December 21, 2013: Some 150 protestors occupied a building used by the state owned company that operates the local Internet access. For much of the day Internet was shut down but was restored before the end of the day.

December 22, 2013: In the east (50 kilometers outside Benghazi) a suicide truck bomber attacked a checkpoint and killed 13 people.

December 24, 2013: In the east (Benghazi) a soldier was shot dead.

December 26, 2013: In the east (Benghazi) another army officer was shot dead.

December 27, 2013: In the east (Benghazi) an army officer was shot dead.

In the southwest production resumed at the Sarir and Msala oilfields.

Four American military personnel from the embassy, out scouting travel routes 65 kilometers west of the capital were briefly arrested at a checkpoint. The Americans apparently suspected it was a false checkpoint and that they were in danger. That led to a confrontation and their brief detention.

December 29, 2013: Agreements were signed with Algeria to increase economic and security cooperation. Both nations will send more troops and police to their mutual border and the forces on both sides will coordinate operations more closely.

December 30, 2013: In the Libyan city of Misrata Libyan security forces arrested Saifallah Ben Hassine, the leader of Tunisian terror group Ansar Sharia. Ansar Sharia claimed that their leader was not captured and it’s still uncertain if he was.

Today was the deadline for unauthorized militias to disband. Most militias ignored the order.

December 31, 2013: The GNC (General National Congress), formed to create a new constitution for the country to vote on and rule until that is done, has extended its power for another year. The separatist activity has prevented any national vote and that must be dealt with before a constitution can be approved. The various factions in the GNC cannot agree on much, although there is a consensus that the new constitution would use Islamic (Sharia) law in an effort to placate the many Islamic conservative groups. This makes local Christians (native Copts, who have been Christian and present for 2,000 years and are five percent of the population).

January 2, 2014: The Libyan rebellion, partly in reaction to high levels of corruption has made corruption worse in Libya and other Arab countries that underwent government change. Corruption is measured on a 1 (most corrupt) to 100 (not corrupt) scale. The three most corrupt nations have a rating of 8 (Afghanistan, North Korea and Somalia) and the least corrupt is 91 (New Zealand and Denmark). In the last year Libya has gone from 21 to 15 in the corruption index while Yemen went from 18 to 15 and Iraq from 18 to 16. The Middle East average is 37 against the world average (for 177 countries) of 43. Egypt, which is still suffering unrest, is unchanged at 32. The U.S. is 73, Canada is 81 (as is Australia) and Mexico 34. There are bright spots in the Middle East, with the UAE at 69.

January 5, 2014: The navy fired on two tankers trying to dock in the eastern port of Sedra to take on a cargo of oil. The self-proclaimed independent Cyrenaica (eastern Libya) holds Sedra and wants to sell oil to sustain their rebellion. Meanwhile the Cyrenaica leaders hired a Canadian firm to help sell their oil, preferably to someone who was willing to defy the blockade by the Libyan Navy.
In the south production resumed at the southwestern El Sharara oilfield. Operations had been halted since October.

January 6, 2014: The government has begun withholding salaries to militias that refuse to obey government orders.

January 8, 2014: The self-proclaimed independent Cyrenaica (eastern Libya) in effect declared war on Libya by announcing that it would use force to prevent the navy from stopping tankers docking and taking on oil. Cyrenaica wants to sell the oil from the oil fields and export facilities it has held since July.

January 10, 2014: The U.S. declared two Libyan Islamic terrorist groups and a Tunisian one, all called Ansar Sharia, to be international Islamic terrorists. Also designated were the leaders of these groups (Ahmed Abu Khattalah and Sufian bin Qumu in Libya and Seifallah Ben Hassine in Tunisia). The Libyan groups are believed responsible for the attack in September 11, 2012 that killed the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans in Benghazi. Hassine was released from a Tunisian prison in 2011. This was after the revolution and part of an amnesty for “political prisoners”. He was serving a 43 year sentence for Islamic terrorism. Hassine was a collaborator with Osama Bin Laden even before September 11, 2001 and he promptly resumed those activities by organizing Ansar Sharia and making attacks on politicians that opposed his goal of turning Tunisia into a religious dictatorship. Ansar Sharia is responsible for most of the Islamic terrorism in Tunisia and has openly claimed allegiance with al Qaeda. The Libyan branches operate in Benghazi and Derma and their leaders also have a history with al Qaeda. One of the leaders had been held in Guantánamo Bay, the U.S. detention facility in Cuba.

January 11, 2014: Near the eastern city of Sirte gunmen shot dead the Deputy Industry Minister. Police found a defective bomb hidden in the minister’s car and the shooters were apparently the backup plan. This violence is related to Islamic terrorists trying to take control of Sirte.

January 12, 2014: Tribal violence down south over the last few days has caused about a hundred casualties (27 of them dead). The violence is near the town of Sabha, which is 770 kilometers south of Tripoli and astride the main road going to the Niger border. The fighting is a continuation of ancient animosities between tribes divided by ethnicity as well as loyalty to the former dictator Kaddafi, who used tribal loyalties to maintain power and favored certain tribes. Some of the pro-Kaddafi tribes kept fighting after Kaddafi died in 2011. The violence is not so much about putting Kaddafi followers back into power, but holding on to Kaddafi era privileges and avoiding punishment for crimes committed to support Kaddafi’s rule. In this case violence continued on the southern border where the pro-rebel Tabu tribesmen were put in charge of border (with Sudan, Chad and Niger) security. There they constantly skirmished with the pro-Kaddafi tribes. Another element of this rivalry was that the Tabu are black African while the pro-Kaddafi tribes are Arab. Kaddafi tended to support Arab domination over black Africans, something many Arabs still support. However, in some cases Kaddafi favored black tribes in the north, and used them to keep the population in line.

Greed for a larger share of the oil revenue is tearing the country apart. The problem is a classic one in Arab countries where tribalism, along with political and religious factionalism makes governing difficult when there is oil wealth to be had. In this case there is a country called Libya but there are too few Libyans. That is, there are not enough people in Libya willing to cooperate with each other for the common good. There is no quick fix. The cure is messy and time-consuming. Libyans fear they will have to suffer through another round of civil war before any progress in achieving national unity is achieved.
The blockades had cut the normal 1.5 million barrels a day in exports by 80-90 percent. Oil production has doubled in the last few weeks, but many of the angry tribes and militias that began blocking production last July are still armed, around and unhappy. In January the government managed to restart about a third of that. Unless the government can get the oil flowing quickly in 2014, the entire country will begin to suffer major shortages of food and other essentials. Libya imports most of its food and much else. All is paid for by oil. Already officials in charge of buying food are warning that shipments will halt soon because of lack of cash. The government has called for the population to rise up (peacefully) against the factions that are shutting down oil production. That may actually happen once the shortages become widespread and severe. The government is also trying to negotiate with the various factions, but that is proving difficult because the faction leaders tend to maintain the loyalty of their followers by promising more than they, or the government, can deliver.

The months of oil export blockades means the government is running out of money. The blockades have cost the government $10 billion so far and cash reserves and borrowing ability are running out. Even some Islamic terrorist militias are calling for an end to the oil export blockades. But the Islamic terrorists also want the elected government eliminated and replaced with a religious dictatorship. That is not likely to happen if only because there are several major Islamic terrorist militias that do not agree with each other on how a religious dictatorship would work. This is a common problem with Islamic terrorists and their desire to replace government.

The government still has warships and patrol boats off shore preventing any unauthorized oil shipments but the eastern rebels are threatening to use force against the navy. The eastern rebels want a return to the form of government Libya had before Kaddafi took over in 1969. Back then Libya consisted of three large provinces, each with a lot of autonomy. The one in the east was called Cyrenaica. Meanwhile Islamic terrorist groups in the east appear to behind the growing number of attacks against security personnel in general and intelligence experts in particular. These Islamic terrorists are also a threat to this newly declared regional government.

January 13, 2014: The 2011 revolution overthrew longtime dictator Moamar Kaddafi but it did not change the tribalism that Kaddafi used for decades to keep potential threats from replacing him. It was only when most of the tribes (and two-thirds of the population) united to overthrow Kaddafi that his divide and rule technique failed. Now the tribes are all out to grab what they can for themselves, no matter what the cost to the rest of the country. Nearly three years later you have the tribes and militias in eastern Libya forming a separate state called Cyrenaica and continuing to shut down most oil exports. Other tribes throughout the country are following equally selfish and greedy strategies.

January 17, 2014: In the east (between Derna and Tobruk) two Italian telecommunications engineers were kidnapped, apparently for ransom.

January 18, 2014: In the south (Sabha) the government declared a state of emergency to deal with the tribal fighting. The immediate reason for this was the seizure of an air force base outside Sabha by pro-Kaddafi tribal rebels. The government sent more troops to Sabha and the air force has attacked the rebels from the air.

January 21, 2014: In Tripoli fighting with pro-Kaddafi groups left five dead and 20 wounded. Elsewhere in the capital five cabinet ministers belonging to the second most powerful political party quit the government. The five former ministers are Islamic conservatives who were frustrated at the governments’ opposition to adopting more Islamic lifestyle rules for the population. Such rules are
widely unpopular but the Islamic conservative groups are on a Mission from God and will not negotiate.

January 23, 2014: In Tripoli a South Korean government trade official was freed by a police raid. The South Korean had been kidnapped three days earlier, apparently just for ransom. Four of his kidnappers were arrested.

January 26, 2014: Egypt warned that recent kidnapping of Egyptian diplomats, in order to get a Libyan militia leader freed from an Egyptian jail, will have unfavorable ramifications for Libya. Five Egyptian embassy personnel were kidnapped on the 24th and 25th causing Egypt to release the militia leader to get their diplomats freed. At the same time Egypt pulled all of its embassy personnel out of Libya. The kidnappings began shortly after the militia leader was arrested in Egypt (apparently for his Moslem Brotherhood connections).

In Tripoli the Interior Minister escaped an assassination attempt as his car was fired on.

January 27, 2014: In the southeast (Kefre) a clash with militiamen who refused to disarm left four soldiers dead and seven wounded. Schools in the area have been closed for a week because of the frequent gunfire between soldiers and militiamen.

January 29, 2014: In the south (Sabha) troops drove tribal rebels out of an air force base outside the city. The rebels had held the base for about two weeks. Tribal violence down south since January 11th has caused about a 300 casualties (about a third dead). The violence is near the town of Sabha, which is 770 kilometers south of Tripoli and astride the main road going to the Niger border. The fighting is a continuation of ancient animosities between tribes divided by ethnicity as well as loyalty to the former dictator Kaddafi, who used tribal loyalties to maintain power and favored certain tribes. Some of the pro-Kaddafi tribes (in this case Awled Sleiman) kept fighting after Kaddafi died in 2011. The violence is not so much about putting Kaddafi followers back into power, but holding on to Kaddafi era privileges and avoiding punishment for crimes committed to support Kaddafi’s rule. In this case violence continued on the southern border where the pro-rebel Tabu tribesmen were put in charge of border (with Sudan, Chad and Niger) security. There they constantly skirmished with the pro-Kaddafi tribes. Another element of this rivalry was that the Tabu are black African while the pro-Kaddafi tribes are Arab. Kaddafi tended to support Arab domination over black Africans, something many Arabs still support. However, in some cases Kaddafi favored black tribes in the north, and used them to keep the population in line. Driving the pro-Kaddafi tribal rebels out of the air base will probably end the current round of fighting. This ethnic violence is not over, however.

In Benghazi the college-age son of the Special Forces commander was kidnapped, apparently by Islamic terrorists from groups under attack by the Special Forces. The Special Forces commander responded by increasing pressure on Islamic terrorist militias, especially those suspected to taking his son. This meant more raids and arrests.

January 30, 2014: The interim parliament set February 20th as the date to elect the 60 delegates who would create the new constitution.

Economists point out that not only is Libya running out of cash and credit (because rebel militias have blocked the export of $10 billion worth of oil in the last six months) but the long-term prospects are even grimmer. Because Kaddafi stifled economic growth during his four decades of rule the country is too dependent on oil income. Half the labor force has government jobs, a lot of them unneeded. Without quick development of non-oil enterprises the country will be unable to pay all the salaries and benefits within four or five years.
Once these militias are disbanded the next security problem is in the largely desert southwest, where several large Islamic terrorist groups have been free to establish bases and go about their business. The best the government can do is block the main roads out of the area and try to collect intelligence on what these groups are up to.

In addition to the dead, there are over 5,000 people held captive by over twenty major militias. These groups have captured, or created, jails. The government holds 3,000 prisoners and these are treated much better than many of those held by the militias. Reports of torture, abuse and “arresting” people as a form of kidnapping are common among the militias. Many of the militias, who were seen as freedom fighters in 2011 are now regarded as bandits and government efforts to disband these groups is popular.

The death toll was up in January, to 154 dead (and 463 wounded). This is largely because the government security forces have grown large (and effective) enough to take on more of the militias that have refused to disarm. Many of these militias still believe they remain strong enough to maintain their independence and are willing to fight. The death toll from this sort of violence for all of 2013 was 643.

February 1, 2014: The tribal rebels still blocking the use of the eastern oil export terminals are under growing pressure from their own tribal leaders to lift the blockade. This is because the government has made it clear that over $10 billion in lost oil revenue has consequences and one of them will be cutting government salaries and benefits and this would make the leaders believed responsible very unpopular, even among their own people. The big problem with these rebels is that they are younger men (generally under 40) who do not pay much attention to tribal leaders. But the tribal elders do still have a lot of influence and prestige. Now that the grand promises of the young leaders have turned out to be unworkable and counterproductive desperate Libyans, including many of the younger ones, are turning to the tribal elders and leaders for help. In turn, the tribal leaders have become more amenable to compromise and cooperation at the national level. Many of the senior government leaders are tribal leaders or from families with influence in tribal affairs. The tribes may turn out to be the solution. Up until now the tribes have been a large part of the problem.

February 1, 2014: In Tripoli 54 inmates escaped from a prison because of incompetence by the guards and lack of effective supervision of security of the prison.

In the east (Benghazi) a retired police colonel was shot dead as were two sons of police officials. Islamic terrorists, or criminal gangs, have been killing police and intelligence commanders for over a year now.

February 2, 2014: The government revealed that the last of Kaddafi’s chemical weapons was destroyed on January 26th. Kaddafi had agreed to destroy his chemical weapons stockpiles in 2003 but that effort was stalled by the 2011 revolution. The Kaddafi destruction was originally planned to take until 2016. After 2011 NATO agreed to provide money and training for Tunisians to finish the destruction sooner, which is what was done.

February 3, 2014: In neighboring Tunisia police raided an Islamic terrorist camp outside the capital (Tunis) and killed seven Islamic terrorists, including a local leader. Like Libya, Tunisia initially released a lot of Islamic terrorists from jail after their 2011 revolution and let them organize. But soon the Islamic terrorists were trying to overthrow the newly elected government and, unlike in Libya, the Tunisians united against the Islamic terrorist groups and have killed or arrested most of them in the last year.
February 5, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) someone fired an RPG and the warhead landed in a primary school playground and wounded twelve children. Two militias were engaged in a battle nearby.

February 6, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) gunmen attacked the studios of two TV stations. In Tripoli gunmen tried to attack the army headquarters compound but were repulsed.

February 8, 2014: In the east (Darna) a former prosecutor was assassinated. The dead man was an Islamic hardliner and resigned in March 2013 for health reasons.

February 9, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) two bombs went off early in the day, causing some property damage but no casualties.

February 13, 2014: In Tripoli a RPG was fired at a TV station, wounding a watchman. There has been growing violence against journalists who publicize crimes some militias are committing, or sometimes for just criticizing the political opinions of someone who has gunmen on the payroll.

February 14, 2014: In the west (Ziltan) 92 prisoners escaped from a prison. Only four guards were on duty for 220 inmates. Reinforcements were called and 19 of the escapees were quickly recaptured. The last head of internal intelligence under Kaddafi, Abdullah Mansur, was finally given up by Niger and extradited to Libya. Niger was finally convinced that Mansur was still involved in stirring up trouble in Libya, especially with the tribes along the Niger border with Libya.

February 15, 2014: The former head of the military (Khalifa Haftar) called for parliament to resign and for the army to take over. Haftar was arrested and charged with calling for a coup.

February 17, 2014: Oil production dropped 70,000 barrels to 390,000 barrels a day because of yet another militia taking over an export facility.

February 18, 2014: Two major militias in Tripoli (Al Qaaqaa and Al Sawaaq) gave the parliament 72 hours to turn over power to the Islamic groups or else force would be used. The government called in more troops to prevent that, but the two militias still have their weapons and ambitions. The government called this an attempted coup.

February 19, 2014: A national election was held to select 60 delegates (out of 692 candidates) to the panel that will create a new constitution. Turnout was poor, with only 15 percent of those eligible actually voting. Only 29 percent of the 3.4 million eligible voters bothered to register and even fewer actually voted. The last election (19 months ago) saw 79 percent register. People are discouraged because of all the corruption, chaos and poverty. Islamic terrorist groups also threatened voters at some polling stations, because they believe democracy is un-Islamic.

A recent study concluded that Islamic terrorist activity in North Africa and the Sahel (the semi-desert region below the Sahara Desert and north of the forests of Central Africa) increased 60 percent in 2013. This was a result of the aftermath of the Arab Spring uprisings that overthrew the governments of Libya and Tunisia. That contributed to the rebellion in northern Mali in 2012. Eliminating the police state governments of Tunisia and Libya, and freeing many Islamic terrorists from prison, was a huge boost to these terrorist organizations and it’s going to take a while to undo the damage.

Sporadic fighting continues in many parts of the country, especially outside the capital (Tripoli) where pro-Kaddafi militias are still active and along the southern border where pro-Kaddafi tribes resent the loss of cash and goods Kaddafi would regularly send them. In the east (Benghazi) Islamic terrorist groups often fight with each other and anyone else who openly disagrees with them.
Many Libyans are justifiably angry at the interim parliament they elected in July 2012 for a term of just 18 months. This interim group was to arrange a constitutional rewrite and run the country in the meantime. The interim group was unable to do either task and voted to extend its power in January, for the rest of the year. This was very unpopular. But as angry as many Libyans are they have only themselves to blame. Too many Libyans support factions that cannot or will not agree with enough other factions to create a working government. It’s another case of, “we have met the enemy and it is us.”

February 21, 2014: What divides Libyans more than anything else is their oil wealth. The tribes living where the oil comes from want a larger share. Actually, everyone wants more, for one reason or another. No agreement has been reached and many groups near the oil fields and export terminals have seized oil facilities had halted most (over 70 percent by the end of 2013) oil exports. All this was largely unexpected because at the start of 2013 oil production was at 1.4 million barrels a day and nearly back to normal. Then some of the militias the government had hired to provide security at oil facilities decided their loyalties were more to themselves than the national government. Before the 2011 revolution oil accounted for over 90 percent of government revenue and over 70 percent of GDP. With over $12 billion in oil revenue lost so far the government is running out of credit and will soon have no way to pay for essential imports, like food. Because the refineries that provide fuel for Libyans are also shut down the government has to spend scarce cash to import fuel. That won’t last long because the government will have run out of cash and credit sometime in 2014. After that the economy will collapse and with that food and other essentials will not be available for most Libyans. Before that happens, force will be the only option, as starvation is the last thing anyone wants. The economy is already in decline because many payments have not been made for things that can be delayed (infrastructure and replacements for old or destroyed equipment).

February 22, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) someone planted a bomb in the car of an army commando and that killed the soldier when he got in the vehicle.

February 24, 2014: Seven Christians were found dead on a beach after being kidnapped from their homes in Benghazi by an Islamic militia. This is the second such incident in Benghazi this year.

February 25, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) gunmen murdered a policeman. In the south (Sarir) days of fighting between rival pro-government militias damaged a power plant and put it out of action. The government wants to make repairs but has no money for that. This means there will probably be a severe lack of electricity in the region around Sarir until the plant can be fixed.

February 26, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) gunmen murdered two policemen.

March 1, 2014: In the capital armed belong to a pro-government militia dispersed protestors holding a sit-in protest outside parliament. The large crowd was there to try and force parliament to make the country work. No one seems able to do that, but protesting and using force to get your way are very popular.

March 2, 2014: In the capital armed protestors broke into the parliament building and beat some members of parliament. The protestors want new elections. In the east (Benghazi) a French engineer was found shot dead. Much of Libya is lawless and robberies and murders, especially of government employees or foreigners, is increasingly common.

March 4, 2014: In the capital a militia attacked the state controlled TV station. The culprit was believed to be a militia that had been driven out of another TV facility recently by government forces. In the east (Benghazi) an air force colonel was assassinated.
March 5, 2014: A 37,000 ton oil tanker flying the flag of North Korea approached the oil export port of Es Sider. The government warned this ship to go away, as the rebels holding Es Sider have been trying to sell the oil stored at the port all year and a government gunboat chased away a Maltese tanker in January. The North Korean ship did not dock because the workers at the port are still loyal to the government and refused to assist in loading oil. The rebels required several days to find someone who would take care of doing the loading for them.

March 9, 2014: A North Korean tanker docked at the militia held oil export of Es Sider and has begun loading oil. The government sent a gunboat and threatened to fire on the North Korean ship if it tried to leave with the oil.

March 11, 2014: Parliament dismissed the prime minister because the government failed to stop a North Korean tanker from loading $30 million worth of oil at the militia held oil export port of Es Sider and escaping to international waters despite the presence of a navy gunboat. The parliament also ordered the new prime minister (the former defense minister) to send a military force, within a week, to the three oil export port militias have seized and restore government control. The government has resisted taking this approach because of a shortage of troops, fear of damaging the ports and uncertainty that such an effort would even work.

The UN accused recently Libya of being a major source of illegal weapons exports. Various criminal gangs, Islamic terrorist groups and militias are shipping out small arms and other portable weapons stolen from government warehouses during the 2011 civil war. UN investigators have found Libyan weapons illegally exported to at least 14 countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East.

Sporadic fighting continues in many parts of the country, especially outside the capital (Tripoli) where pro-Kaddafi militias are still active and along the southern border where pro-Kaddafi tribes resent the loss of cash and goods Kaddafi would regularly send them. In the east (Benghazi) Islamic terrorist groups often fight with each other and anyone else who openly disagrees with them.

In most parts of the country there is no law other than what the local militia provides. This isn’t a lot different from what Libya has been used to for thousands of years. Even under four decades of Kaddafi the country was feudal, with Kaddafi giving control of parts of the country to trusted subordinates who could do what they liked as long as there was no unrest and no defiance of the national government. The monarchy before that operated the same way as did the Italian colonial government before that and a long series of feudal and warlord rulers stretching back into antiquity. Democracy is something new for Libya and the voting is done more with guns rather than ballots. The election results are ignored by the militia, tribal and terrorist and gang leaders. While many Libyans seem to understand that they must either act together or endure endless armed chaos it is unclear if this majority will, or can, act together and restore peace and prosperity. If Libya does slide into complete chaos the international community will find itself with another Somalia, but one with oil. Turning that oil into cash is difficult because the oil production and export facilities are vulnerable to attack and difficult to rebuild in a combat zone.

Because the refineries that provide fuel for Libyans are also shut down the government has to spend scarce cash to import fuel. That won’t last long because the government will have run out of cash and credit sometime in 2014. After that the economy will collapse and with that food and other essentials will not be available for most Libyans. Before that happens, force will be the only option, as starvation is the last thing anyone wants. The economy is already in decline because many payments have not been made for things that can be delayed (infrastructure and replacements for old or destroyed equipment). The government ordering the troops in does not sound so crazy in light of the dire financial situation. The absence of law in most of the country is crippling the economy,
which is still trying to recover from the 2011 revolution. Kaddafi tightly controlled the economy and his overthrow was supposed to allow economic activity to flourish. But the widespread presence of armed men taking what they want and kidnapping for ransom has made entrepreneurs and investors unwilling to do much.

Before the 2011 revolution oil accounted for over 90 percent of government revenue and over 70 percent of GDP. With over $14 billion in oil revenue lost so far the government is running out of credit and will soon have no way to pay for essential imports, like food. These shortages have begun to appear and that is driving many people to either back the government or use more desperate measures to grab whatever they can.

The basic problem is that Libyans have proved unable to agree on how to handle their oil wealth. The tribes living where the oil comes from want a larger share. Actually, everyone wants more, for one reason or another. In the last year various local militias near the oil fields and export terminals have seized these facilities halted most (over 70 percent by the end of 2013 and over 80 percent now) oil exports. All this was largely unexpected because at the start of 2013 oil production was at 1.4 million barrels a day and nearly back to normal. Then greed got the best of many factions who decided their loyalties were more to themselves than to Libya as a whole. It’s been downhill since then.

Meanwhile the oil exports continue to decline. A permanent replacement for the deposed prime minister will be selected by parliament by the end of the month and he will face a growing mess. Parliament is still divided with about half the members supporting the establishment of a religious dictatorship while the other half backs an ongoing democracy. Neither group has had sufficient clout to make their version of Libya work. The pro-religion block is divided into many factions, most of them armed and many willing to kill to get their way. The democrats argue more than they act and have more problems with corruption. While the religious groups are less corrupt they are also less willing to accept orders from anyone who does not agree with their particular version of Islam.

March 12, 2014: The North Korean registered ship that fled Es Sider with $30 million worth of oil is actually owned by a Saudi company and the owners will now try to sell the oil on the black market and share the proceeds with the rebel militia that controls Es Sider. That militia was originally the security guards hired to protect the port. But a local militia leader persuaded the guards to seize control of the port last August. The government stopped paying the rebel guards and their leader has been trying to sell the oil stored at the port ever since to keep his scam going. The government threatened to use force to stop that and after three months of success has failed. Parliament then fired the prime minister, began investigating him for corruption and appointed the defense minister as temporary prime minister. The new prime minister, at the urging of parliament, ordered the military to move on the ports within a week and this may fail as well. This latest chapter in the Libyan Follies should be played out by April 1st.

March 13, 2014: North Korea denied any involvement with the North Korean registered tanker that carried off Libyan oil illegally. North Korea pointed out that the ship was registered in North Korea in February for six months with the understanding that there would be no illegality involved. The ship is actually owned by a Saudi company and currently controlled by an Egyptian shipping company that is apparently helping to sell the oil. North Korea has long been involved with shady deals like this and is apparently trying to distance itself from one that went off the rails.

March 14, 2014: The UN agreed to extend its support effort in Libya until March 13, 2015.

March 15, 2014: The parliament gave the interim prime minister another 15 days in power. Parliament is, as usual, deadlocked. This time it is over who the new prime minister should be. Parliament is split into many factions, most of them either secular or Islamic.
March 16, 2014: The rebel militias in the east that are holding three oil export ports now say they are willing to negotiate. Up until now the militias asserted that they were representing the new government of an independent country called Cyrenaica. The rebels have been trying to make this stick since the beginning of the year but without cash (from selling oil) they got no traction.

In the east (Benghazi) a car bomb went off outside a military school killing seven soldiers and wounding twelve.

March 17, 2014: Some 32 kilometers off the coast of Cyprus two dozen U.S. Navy SEAL commandos used power boats to go from a U.S. Navy destroyer to a nearby North Korean tanker. Once aboard the tanker the SEALs quickly took control and arrested three Libyans the crew of 21 said had, in effect, hijacked the tanker and its $30 million cargo of stolen Libyan oil. There were no casualties and the tanker was taken back to Libya. Libya had asked the United States to help retrieve the tanker, which had fled Libya with the oil. The North Korean registered tanker fled the Libyan oil loading port of Es Sider early on March 11th and made it to international waters before Libyan Navy gunboats could catch up. The Libyan sailors were within their rights to board the tanker and retake it, but they were not trained to do so and there were apparently some armed men on the tanker. The tanker then moved towards Cyprus and Libya asked the Americans for some help. The U.S. dispatched a destroyer with SEALs on board and the American warship was soon following the tanker. The U.S. government agreed on the 16th to use SEALs to get the tanker back and the raid was carried out before dawn on the 17th.

March 18, 2014: In the southwest the local Tuareg tribes warned the government not to use force to remove the militias occupying oil facilities in the area.

March 19, 2014: The success of recent joint operations around Lake Chad has led the nations bordering Lake Chad (Chad, Cameroon, Libya, Niger, Nigeria and the Central African Republic/CAR) to form a permanent task force to patrol the lake region and coordinate operations against smugglers, Islamic terrorists and bandits. The initial emphasis will be on containing the Islamic terrorists, mainly the Nigerian Boko Haram, in the area. The new task force will have its headquarters in the Nigerian town of Baga, which is on the lake. Baga is large enough to accommodate a new military base. The goal is to have the new task force up and running before the end of the year. Increased coordination will start immediately.

March 20, 2014: In a first, the Libyan government finally admitted that it has an Islamic terrorism problem and called for international help to deal with it. The government now wants to form a dedicated counter-terrorism force and knows that will require outside help. NATO, which has many members just across the Mediterranean, is expected to be the main source of assistance. Countries like Italy and France have many Arab speaking counter-terrorism operatives and many expatriate Libyans live over there. Then there are the Americans, with all their useful gadgets, technical magic and unique specialists (like the SEAL commandos who took back the tanker full of stolen Libyan oil).

March 21, 2014: In the capital a Tunisian diplomat was apparently kidnapped for ransom. Earlier in the day (before dawn) someone got past the tight security at the main airport and placed a bomb on the main runway. A timer detonated the bomb, causing little damage but closing down flight operations for several hours.

March 22, 2014: The army began fighting rebel militias in the east that are holding three oil export ports. The rebels apparently hoped to interfere with the arrival of more troops but were driven off. The troops are better trained than the militiamen and that is apparently making a difference. On March 12th the government gave the rebel militias until the 26th to relinquish control of the oil ports. The rebels do not appear to be making preparations to leave.
March 23, 2014: In the east (Derna) gunmen ambushed a van carrying $600,000 from a telecommunications company to a bank and made off with the money. The thieves were probably members of one of the militias that dominate the city (to the east of Benghazi). There is no law in places like Derna but the local militias still need cash.

March 24, 2014: The government said it is releasing the 21 man crew (consisting of six Pakistanis, six Indians, three Sri Lankans, two Syrians, two Sudanese and two Eritreans) of the oil tanker captured by American SEALs and returned to Libya on the 23rd and its cargo of 350,000 barrels of oil will be unloaded there. The U.S. handed control of the tanker to Libya in international waters some 30 kilometers off Tripoli and removed the American sailors who had supervised the return of the ship.

March 26, 2014: The U.S. has sent a team of American soldiers to Libya to work out details of a training program being set up in Bulgaria for the new Libyan Army. In late 2013 the U.S. agreed to establish a training facility in Bulgaria where 500 American soldiers would serve as instructors at a camp that would train 8,000 (or more) Libyan recruits in basic military skills.

March 27, 2014: Another militia composed of personnel hired to provide oil facility security has gone rogue and blocked a pipeline from a southwestern oil field. The former guards want lots of money. The main source of exported oil now are two offshore fields.

March 31, 2014: As a goodwill gesture to get negotiations going the government has released the three militiamen who were arrested off Cyprus by U.S. SEALs on the tanker carrying $30 million in stolen Libyan oil. The rebels are also demanding the return of the tanker and the stolen oil but the government is apparently not willing to go that far. The three militiamen were quickly pointed out by the crew of the tanker after the SEALs seized control. The ship captain said the three were armed and tasked with ensuring that the tanker went to wherever the oil brokers (who were going to sell the stolen oil) instructed. The three Libyan militiamen were armed and the crew was not, so they just went along, having been assured that they would be paid and not harmed if they did. The crew were not so sure they would be safe as it appeared the Libyan militiamen were dealing with some pretty shady characters.

France Guards The South: The continued success of the French-led counter-terrorism effort in northern Mali and the equally determined efforts by Islamic terrorists to maintain a presence there anyway has led France to set up a permanent base in the north. This would be similar to the base it has long maintained on the other end of Africa in Djibouti. Since September 11, 2001 that base has been shared with the Americans and the Mali base is expected to see a lot of Americans helping out. France currently has about 1,600 troops in northern Mali and that appears to be about what it will take to staff the permanent base. France is particularly concerned about the continuing unrest in Libya and the ability of Islamic terrorists to establish bases and training facilities there. Because of all that, this year there have been several incidents of Islamic terrorists moving into northern Mali from Libya and until the Libyan government establishes some control over the many Islamic terrorists roaming Libya, more will show up in northern Mali.

The Shortages: Another unresolved problem is that while there is a Libya there are not enough true (patriotic and loyal to a central government) Libyans. There are many countries suffering from this problem with tribal, ethnic, regional and other loyalties that create lots of corruption and little national unity. In these conditions a lot of the corruption is not seen as stealing, but simply taking care of your own group. In a place like Libya, where decades of oil wealth have created a population largely dependent on oil income for basic survival, this lack of unity has become a matter of life or death.
Another source of unrest is brewing on the Tunisian border. There the smugglers are having more problems with the security forces on both sides of the frontier. It’s all about money of course as the smuggling deprives the governments of over half a billion dollars a year in revenue. But the smuggling, especially of cheap Libyan into Tunisia, has become the primary livelihood for thousands of Libyan families. Locals believe the Libyan and Tunisian security forces are simply seeking a bigger cut of the smuggler profits. That’s how things work in this part of the world. The smugglers also have to find a patron, a “boss of all bosses” to negotiate deals with local army and police commanders. Everybody wants to get paid.

Let’s Make A Deal: The rebel militias holding east Libyan oil facilities now say they are ready to work out a deal over control of these facilities. What changed their minds was the March 17th U.S. Navy SEAL raid to capture the rebel controlled tanker full of Libyan oil. Apparently over the last two weeks the rebels have learned that the foreign criminal gangs who were once willing to broker sales of stolen Libyan oil have backed away. The oil smuggling gangs see the American warships and commandoes as a deal breaker. With no way to sell the oil they control, the rebel militias must quickly make the best deal they can with the government because these militia leaders are broke and their armed followers expected great things to come from occupying the oil facilities. Government troops are closing in and apparently it comes down to working out a price to avoid a battle and get the militias out of the oil export facilities.

The militias holding the eastern oil facilities have also lose some of their Robin Hood glow. They now stand accused of working with former officials of the Kaddafi government to smuggle oil out of the country and sell it. There are still a lot of Kaddafi era officials in Libya and even more overseas. Some of these Kaddafi henchmen are still wealthy, having gotten a lot of money (usually obtained by corrupt means) out of the country before the 2011 revolution. These guys still have contacts and fans inside Libya (among the tribes that Kaddafi favored) as well as a taste for obtaining more Libyan cash. The pro-Kaddafi exiles are open for business and smuggling is more attractive to them than subsidizing terrorism. The war is over, Kaddafi is gone and life goes on.

Because the refineries that provide fuel for Libyans are also shut down the government has to spend scarce cash to import fuel. Even the greedy militias are now aware that what they are doing means the economy will collapse and with that food and other essentials will not be available for most Libyans. To avoid that catastrophe there is compromise or force, or a combination of the two. Ultimately force will prevail as starvation is the last thing anyone wants. The economy is already in decline because many payments have not been made for things that can be delayed (infrastructure and replacements for old or destroyed equipment). The government ordering the troops in does not sound so crazy in light of the dire financial situation. The absence of law in most of the country is crippling the economy, which is still trying to recover from the 2011 revolution. Kaddafi tightly controlled the economy and his overthrow was supposed to allow economic activity to flourish. But the widespread presence of armed men taking what they want and kidnapping for ransom has made entrepreneurs and investors unwilling to do much.

The basic problem is that Libyans have proved unable to agree on how to handle their oil wealth. The tribes living where the oil comes from want a larger share. Actually, everyone wants more, for one reason or another. In the last year various local militias near the oil fields and export terminals have seized these facilities halted most (over 70 percent by the end of 2013 and over 90 percent now) oil exports. All this was largely unexpected because at the start of 2013 oil production was at 1.4 million barrels a day and nearly back to normal. Then greed got the best of many factions who decided their loyalties were more to themselves than to Libya as a whole. It’s been downhill since then. Before the 2011 revolution oil accounted for over 90 percent of government revenue and over 70 percent of
GDP. With over $20 billion in oil revenue lost so far the government is running out of credit and will soon have no way to pay for essential imports, like food. These shortages have become more widespread and severe and that is driving many people to either back the government or use more desperate measures to grab whatever they can.

April 3, 2014: The predicted (last Summer when the rebel militias cut off oil exports) cash crises has arrived and it has everyone’s attention. Despite the rebels blocking oil exports now expressing willingness to deal, oil exports are still at an all-time low of 100,000 barrels a day. The government has only $116 billion left and little credit. Government banking officials insist that can be made to last for at least two years but Libyans are seeing growing cutbacks in government spending. Most Libyans depend on the government for jobs, food and other essentials. Without oil income the government cannot deliver. About two thirds of the $53 billion annual government budget is for salaries and benefits. A growing number of government workers are having their pay or benefits delayed so that more essential issues (like food imports) can be attended to. The government reserves are not all cash and it takes time to convert some of those assets into cash. The government is also warning people that a lot of Kaddafi era subsidies will have to go in order to keep the economy going. Such a move would be very unpopular. Kaddafi provided a lot of stuff at very low prices. Like loaves of bread for a few pennies. Fuel and electricity was also sold far below cost as were airline, bus and train tickets. Another problem is the many people who collect a government paycheck don’t do any work, or even show up for work. Thus there are 22,000 soldiers in Benghazi, according to payroll records, but few of them are on the job. Some of that is because some government or military official is pocketing the payroll, but in other cases there are real people getting paid but they only show up on payday, if that (because direct-deposit is available). Changing all these bad habits is very difficult. The greed, Islamic terrorism and sense of entitlement that is so widespread in Libya also means that foreign investors are not interested because Libyans make inefficient and troublesome employees. Libya is no place to create wealth but it is an ideal place to squander it.

April 5, 2014: In the northeast (near the Egyptian border) a militia released fifty Egyptian trucks and their drivers and passengers. The militias are demanding that Libya and Egypt stop prosecuting.

In Benghazi thousands of government and commercial workers went on strike to demand better security.

April 6, 2014: The government negotiated a deal to reopen the four oil export ports seized by local militias last June-August. The turnover will be completed by the end of April.

April 7, 2014: Libya and Tunisia have reopened their main border crossing after it had been closed for a month. Both countries say they have resolved issues. The closure was officially about the safety of Libyans in Tunisia but an unspoken issue was smuggling. After paying bribes trucks roll freely across the border. Most of the illicit trade involves cheap (because it’s subsidized) Libyan fuel going to Tunisia. Smuggling is a big business here, with up to a fifth of the population depending on it. Closing border crossings was only a part of the smuggling problem. The smugglers are having more problems with the security forces on both sides of the frontier. It’s all about money of course as the smuggling deprives the governments of over half a billion dollars a year in revenue. But the smuggling, especially of cheap Libyan oil into Tunisia has become the primary livelihood for thousands of Libyan families. Locals believe the Libyan and Tunisian security forces are simply seeking a bigger cut of the smuggler profits. That’s how things work in this part of the world. The smugglers also have to find a patron, a “boss of all bosses” to negotiate deals with local army and police commanders. Everybody wants to get paid.
In Benghazi an air force officer died when a bomb placed under his car exploded. In nearby Derna an Islamic terrorist leader was killed by an unidentified assailant.

April 9, 2014: The oil port of Herega was handed over to government control. A local militia had controlled the port since June 2013.

April 10, 2014: In Tripoli gunmen intercepted a vehicle transporting prisoners and freed ten of them.

April 11, 2014: In Tripoli two prisoners died during an attempt to break out of jail.

Security officials in Mali and Niger confirmed what many had suspected, that Islamic terrorist leader Mokhtar Belmokhtar (the planner of the January 2013 natural gas facility attack in southern Algeria that got 37 workers killed) of Islamic terrorist group Al Mourabitoun was alive and operating from a base in southern Libya. Al Mourabitoun was formed in August 2013 when two Islamic terrorist factions merged. The new group had already been detected operating in northern Mali and Niger (where it had carried out several daring attacks, including a prison break in June and twin bombings in May 2013). One faction was an al Qaeda splinter group led by Belmokhtar who had a reputation for always escaping the many efforts to kill or capture him. Belmokhtar was number two or three in the North African al Qaeda organization (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb or AQIM) but formed his own splinter group in late 2012. In November 2013 France announced that it had killed the second-in-command of Al Mourabitoun near the northern town of Tessalet and was still searching for Belmokhtar, despite reports that he might have died during an air attack in 2013. The appearance of these reports of Belmokhtar being alive and where he is may be part of an operation to get him to move and possibly confirm his location so an attack can be carried out. The U.S. is offering a $5 million reward for information that would lead to the capture of Belmokhtar.

April 13, 2014: The interim prime minister resigned because of fears for the safety of his family. This was the result of a recent attack on members of his family. Parliament fired the regular prime minister on March 12th because of the botched effort to prevent militias from exporting oil. That prime minister was also being investigated for corruption. The defense minister was installed as temporary prime minister was urged to use whatever means necessary to retake the eastern oil ports. Force was threatened and that helped negotiators work out a deal. The GNC (General National Congress), formed to create a new constitution, is considering which of seven candidates to be the new interim prime minister.

April 15, 2014: In the capital the Jordanian ambassador was kidnapped by gunmen in civilian clothes. The kidnappers demanded the release of an Islamic terrorist from a Jordanian jail but the Jordanian government said it would not do that.

April 19, 2014: Kidnappers holding two Tunisians are demanding the release of two Islamic terrorists held in Tunisia in return for the release of a Tunisian diplomat taken on April 17th and an embassy employee seized on March 21st.

April 23, 2014: An army base 27 kilometers outside Tripoli that was used in 2012 by American Special Forces personnel to train Libyan counter-terrorism forces is now occupied by an Islamic terrorist group affiliated with al Qaeda. There are lots of abandoned military bases in Libya and the security forces are not yet large enough to maintain control of all of them.

April 26, 2014: In Benghazi a 15 year old Egyptian girl was kidnapped, apparently for ransom. The militias and criminal gangs are increasingly turning to kidnapping for ransom for raise cash and stay in business.
The security forces are more and more active shutting down blatant instances of illegal behavior. For example markets that allow weapons and drugs to be sold are being raided and militiamen openly committing crimes have to watch out for nearby police or soldiers, who will often interfere.

The U.S. has publically pledged to help Libya improve its security situation. Only the training for the army was mentioned, but it was implied that other assistance was being supplied to deal with Islamic terrorism and renegade militias in general. One area of technical assistance might be help in controlling the proliferation of unregulated radio and TV stations since 2011. Many of these are run by various Islamic terrorist militias and used for propaganda and to incite devote (or simply concerned) Moslems to come out and support one religious issue or another. The government could use some technical assistance and advice as it strives to regain control of the airwaves.

The eastern oil export ports are not functioning yet because of the need to check for damage and do some maintenance. Only one of the four oil parts is ready for use right now. The government is also starting an investigation of corruption in the oil industry, which was one of the key demands of the militias that had closed these ports for up to eight months. Meanwhile only about 200,000 barrels a day are being exported. This number has to get over a million barrels a day to prevent economic collapse and social chaos in Libya. It was this prospect that persuaded the eastern militias to give up the oil-export facilities.

Under pressure from European countries the Libyan government has said it will try to halt the large number of African migrants coming to Libya then paying Libyan smugglers to get them to Europe, where they can claim asylum and greatly improve their economic situation. The problem is that the Libyan smugglers are doing so much business that they can afford to bribe (or hire a militia to intimidate) Libyan officials to back off. Over 500 people a day are illegally crossing the southern border in an effort to make it to Europe. This is more of a problem for Europeans than Libyans who see the largely black African illegals as a nuisance, mainly because the migrants are just passing through. These travelers don’t want to stay in Libya, which is generally very hostile to these unwanted visitors. The illegals are easy to spot and the locals will sometimes murder migrants who cause any problems. Stopping them from getting into Libya is not easily done because the southern border is largely desert that smugglers have been getting across easily for generations. Checkpoints on the few roads headed north are subject to bribes or simply going around.

Libya has another unpleasant side effect, the reluctance of Western powers to get too involved with seemingly well-meaning rebels. Western nations saw what happened in Libya in 2011 when NATO provided air support and after the quick rebel victory the rebels could not unite and form a government. The Libyan rebels are still fighting each other there and tolerating Islamic terrorist groups. Syria looks to be more of the same and the West does not want to support it. To Iran, this is all an opportunity that cannot be passed up. The Arab oil states are also undismayed and freely arm and subsidize Islamic radical rebel groups.

France is particularly concerned about the continuing unrest in Libya and the ability of Islamic terrorists to establish bases and training facilities there. Because of all that, this year there have been several incidents of Islamic terrorists moving into northern Mali from Libya and until the Libyan government establishes some control over the many Islamic terrorists roaming Libya, more will show up. There are also some terrorist bases in Niger, but the government there is more eager than their Libyan counterparts to do something about it. The Libyan government is more concerned about “foreign interference” (in getting rid of Islamic terrorist groups). This is in large part because many Islamic radicals got elected to parliament in Libya and they interfere with any efforts to deal with
Islamic terrorist groups in Libya. Yet it’s not just the Western nations that are complaining about this, but all of Libya’s neighbors as well. This is expected to result in some “direct action” (commando or missile attacks) in Libya, with or without government permission. When and if that happens the French counter-terrorism forces in Mali have to be prepared for some Libyan based Islamic terror groups seeking to find refuge in northern Mali.

April 28, 2014: What makes the many militias in Libya so difficult to eliminate or control is the fact that many of them are led by Islamic conservatives who use the threat of exposing misbehavior by politicians (use of alcohol, prostitutes or anything considered “un-Islamic”) to bully the government into leaving the militia alone. Thus militias led by guys who do not misbehave (according to the Koran) are difficult to control. Fortunately many militias are led by men who talk the talk but do not walk the walk and are vulnerable. At the same time Islamic radical politicians have a lot of popular support because many Libyans believe devout politicians are the best chance to deal with the corruption that cripples the government and the economy. Unfortunately this is a case of “hope springs eternal” because the track record of pious politicians in Moslem countries shows that these fellows have a short shelf live and eventually, often quite quickly succumb to the temptations of easy money and sinful pleasures.

May 17, 2014: The industrialized nations (especially in the West) saw a record number (over 600,000) of illegal migrants seeking asylum in 2013. That number looks likely to be even higher in 2014. It’s estimated that over 600,000 of these migrants are now in Libya, on the coast and waiting for a smuggler to take them across to Italy. Libya is the favorite country for getting smuggled into Europe because Libya is the most lawless state in North Africa at the moment. It also provides the shortest distance to reach Europe by boat. Once there the migrants seek to reach Germany, France or Britain but if caught in Italy they ask for asylum in Italy. While the war in Syria is currently providing over 100,000 illegal migrants in Europe, most of all such refugees come from Africa, Afghanistan or other areas a lot of people want to leave.

Despite the fact that more than half these migrants are Moslem, very few of them are terrorists. Nevertheless some are the families of terrorists or are related to one but nearly all of them are simply trying to escape difficult situations (war, abject poverty, tyranny). Many of these Moslem migrants do eventually become terrorists or supporters of that sort of thing and for that reason Moslem migrants are less welcome in the West. But because Western nations still have generous asylum laws, and religious profiling is generally frowned on, resistance to the Moslem refugees tends to be informal and illegal. This does discourage Islamic terrorists from trying to get in with the general migrant population and instead they use more expensive and skilled smugglers who know how to move people who might not pass intense police scrutiny.

April 29, 2014: In Tripoli gunmen invaded the parliament building and fired shots. This delayed efforts to select a new prime minister. The old one quit because of Islamic terrorist death threats. In Benghazi a suicide car bomb went off outside an army base, killing two people and wounding two others.

April 30, 2014: In Benghazi a cat bomb went off outside a compound used by army commandos, killing two soldiers and wounding three.

May 2, 2014: In Benghazi Islamic terrorists attacked a police station before dawn, killing nine of the soldiers and police there.

May 3, 2014: In Benghazi a senior military officer escaped an assassination attempt by Islamic terrorists.
May 4, 2014: In Tripoli the parliament selected Ahmed Maiteeq as the new prime minister. Many members of parliament were bitterly opposed to Ahmed Maiteeq, a businessman with close ties to many Islamic radical groups. Members of parliament opposed to Maiteeq accuse him and other pro-Islamic radical members of rigging the vote in parliament that made Maiteeq the new prime minister. The previous prime minister had resigned because of Islamic terrorist threats against his life and those of his family.

May 7, 2014: In the east tribal militia leaders are refusing to deal with the newly selected prime minister. These tribal militias made a deal with the previous prime minister to get closed (by separatist tribal militias) oil export ports reopened. These closures, since mid-2013, have cut Libyan oil exports this year to 250,000 barrels a day. Normal flow is 1.4 million a day.

May 8, 2014: In Tripoli gunmen, in a stolen government car, killed five policemen as they escaped with the stolen vehicle.

May 9, 2014: In Benghazi the head of intelligence for Eastern Libya was murdered by gunmen (probably from one of the many Islamic terrorist groups in the city.)

May 11, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) four people were killed and twenty wounded when armed anti-Islamic terrorist protestors (in a crowd of angry locals demonstrating outside a compound used by an Islamic terrorist group) returned fire at men inside the compound firing at the largely unarmed civilians. The Islamic terrorists do not tolerate criticism well. The demonstrators wanted the Islamic terrorists to leave the city and stop abusing people (usually for not being Islamic enough or to coerce “donations” for their group.)

The government warned Europe that if they did not assist Libya (give billions of dollars) then the flood of Africans using Libya to get to Europe illegally would continue. So far this year ten times as many illegal migrants (over 22,000) have reached Italy from Libya compared to last year. In 2010 deceased dictator Kaddafi has made a similar demand to Europe and had asked for $7 billion.

May 12, 2014: The government reached an agreement with eastern separatists to allow oil fields at el Sharara (340,000 barrels a day), el Feel (35,000 barrels a day) and Wafa (natural gas).

May 13, 2014: Jordan revealed that it had freed an Islamic terrorist it was holding in order to obtain the freedom of one of its diplomats (ambassador Fawaz Aitan) who had been kidnapped in Libya.

The U.S. SOCOM (Special Operations Command) aircraft and 200 marines to Sicily in case they are needed to rescue Americans in Libya.

May 14, 2014: The el Feel oilfield resumed production after being shut down by anti-GNC militias for months.

May 16, 2014: In Benghazi pro-Hiftar forces battled Islamic terrorist militias, leaving at least 79 dead and over 140 wounded. The Islamic terrorists soon realized they were in trouble against the pro-Hiftar forces and fled the city. Hiftar had already gained the allegiance of several army and air force units, who assisted in attacking the Islamic terrorist groups. A large number of army and air force units had been sent to Benghazi over the last year to confront the Islamic terrorists there and now, with the Hiftar forces they were making major progress. Meanwhile the GNC controlled government in Tripoli called Hiftar’s actions a coup. It all began when the Hiftar forces rolled into Benghazi, surrounded the compounds of some of the largest Islamic terrorist militias and demanded that those inside surrender.
Near the border angry (at not getting paid) militiamen freed 250 Egyptian truck drivers who were detained the day before in an attempt to get their late wages. The militia men apparently received convincing assurances that the money was on the way. It is common for senior officials to steal wages for subordinates (and blame it on someone, or something else.)

May 18, 2014: In Tripoli pro-Hiftar gunmen entered the parliament building and declared the GNC controlled parliament dissolved.

May 19, 2014: More army and police units are joining the pro-Hiftar forces. There was some fighting in Tripoli between pro and anti-Hiftar militias, leaving two dead and fifty wounded. The UAE and Saudi Arabia ordered some of their diplomatic personnel out of Tripoli as a precaution.

May 21, 2014: Hiftar called for the formation of a Presidential Council to take over from the GNC controlled parliament and organize new elections. Hiftar is apparently in Abyar, an inland town 50 kilometers east of Benghazi. Meanwhile the GNC is calling for new elections for the GNC controlled parliament on June 25th. That is unlikely to happen as pro-Hiftar forces gain control of more and more of the country. Many senior government officials are openly backing Hiftar. That can be dangerous. For example, the pro-Hiftar chief of staff of the navy was wounded in an assassination attempt today. Assassination is a popular weapon for Islamic terrorists.

In neighboring Tunisia police arrested eight men who had recently arrived from Libya and accused them of being Islamic terrorists, trained in Libya and come to Tunisia to assassinate government officials and aid the Islamic terrorist groups there. Tunisia has been successful in suppressing (but not completely eliminating) Islamic terrorist groups (especially Ansar al Sharia) trying to exist and expand in Tunisia.

May 22, 2014: Pro-GNC militiamen from Misrata were seen entering the capital and taking up positions to defend GNC and the parliament building. There are already pro-Hiftar groups inside Tripoli and they are awaiting reinforcements before making a major move.

The U.S., and some other Western countries, have taken the position that Hiftar is not carrying out a coup but is merely trying to get a working democracy established. This is something the GNC has obviously failed at. If Hiftar does get new elections and does not seek dictatorial power for himself, he will continue to have foreign support. But for the moment Hiftar has to worry about surviving the wrath of the many Islamic terrorist groups in Libya. Hiftar is now a primary target for assassination.

Hiftar has struck a chord with most Libyans, who are still divided by tribal loyalty, religious beliefs and political views. What all Libyans now want is peace and prosperity, especially after witnessing both slip away over the last year. There is general agreement that the Islamic radical and terrorist groups are one of the main reasons for this, although tribal loyalties are a close second. While tribal loyalties are flexible enough to support a nationalist like Hiftar, religious beliefs tend to be absolute and unchanging. That is the problem with all the Islamic groups. Not only are they inflexible but there no agreement about exactly what “true Islam” is. So the Islamic groups, as has been the case for over a thousand years, are not really unified except by their general acceptance of Islam. That belief is not concerned with Libya as much as it is with larger issues, like forcibly converting the entire world to Islam. Hiftar is taking advantage of this weakness to get new national elections held (that will legitimize the current desire for peace and prosperity) and finally get a new constitution created. Many Libyans fear, however, that Hiftar may turn out to be a new dictator, for the late Kaddafi started out as the leader of a populist revolution that turned into a bizarre dictatorship that lasted more than four decades.
The GNC is now being defended by Islamic radical and terrorist militias and some tribal and more secular groups. In Tripoli the GNC has long depended on the LROR (Libyan Revolutionary Operations Room) militia coalition to defend it against hostile militias. The GNC also has the support of most Islamic radical groups, the largest of which is Ansar al Sharia in Benghazi. This group was responsible for the 2012 attack that killed the American ambassador. Many of the militias in Misrata (east of Tripoli) militias support GNC, but many back Hiftar or are neutral.

One motivation for Hiftar was the growing strength of Islamic terrorist groups. Islamic conservatives, radicals and terrorists were well enough organized to prevent the GNC (General National Congress) from creating a new government that controlled the entire country. The Islamic politicians were a minority in the GNC but very active and disruptive. The GNC was originally formed in mid-2012 to create a new constitution for the country to vote on and rule until that was done. At the end of 2013 the deadlocked GNC extended its power for another year. The separatist activity in the east prevented any national vote and that had to be dealt with before a constitution could be completed and approved. The various factions in the GNC could not agree on much, although there was a consensus that the new constitution would use Islamic (Sharia) law. This was an effort to placate the many Islamic conservative groups. This made local Christians (native Copts, who have been Christian and present for 2,000 years and are five percent of the population) nervous.

Hiftar was once a general in Kaddafi’s army, but disagreed with the dictatorship and fled to the United States in 1990 with the help of the CIA. When the Libyan revolution broke out in 2011 Hiftar returned to Libya and joined the rebels. is opposed by a coalition of largely Islamic radical militias and politicians. Hiftar remained on the sidelines after Kaddafi was defeated and various attempts (culminating in the GNC) were made to form a workable government. Sometime in 2013 Hiftar apparently began planning a new revolution.

May 23, 2014: Over the last week a new civil war has broken out. The leader of the rebels is Khalifa Hiftar a retired army general who seeks to destroy the Islamic militias and Islamic terrorist groups that have prevented the establishment of law and order and blocked rebuilding and economic progress. Over the past year Hiftar organized like-minded militias and former soldiers and moved into Benghazi on the 16th. He immediately gained the loyalty of regular army units deployed there and soon controlled Benghazi. The Islamic terrorist groups fled the better trained and determined Hiftar Forces and most non-Islamic militias (especially nationalists but also tribal groups) pledged to follow Hiftar. The attraction here was that Hiftar opposed Islamic radical efforts to establish a religious dictatorship in Libya and an end to the anarchy created by the fact that the many Islamic terrorist groups could not agree on which of them should be in charge.

May 24, 2014: Across the border in Tunisia the government says it detected and foiled a plot by Islamic terrorists from Libya and Algeria to attack tourist and industrial sites in Tunisia.

May 25, 2014: Militia leaders occupying oil facilities in eastern Libya said they would not recognize the new pro-Islamic terrorist prime minister Maiteg. These militia leaders recently made deals with the previous (or, according to some, the current) prime minister to end their blockade of oil exports and did not trust Maiteg to carry out those agreements.

May 26, 2014: In Benghazi a prominent anti-Islamic terrorist journalist was shot dead. He had appeared on TV the day before criticizing the misbehavior of Islamic terrorist militias.

May 27, 2014: Gunmen fired on the home of the new pro-Islamic terrorist prime minister Maiteg.
May 28, 2014: The U.S. has moved an amphibious task force, containing a helicopter carrier and a thousand marines, off the Libyan coast. This is to help in the evacuation of Americans and other foreigners if the situation ashore gets a lot worse.

May 29, 2014: The Chad government complained that ten of its citizens, travelling from Tripoli to Chad were shot dead by men in military uniforms near the Chad border.

May 30, 2014: Algeria sent more troops to guard the borders with Libya, Mali and Tunisia. These three countries have seen an increase in unrest or Islamic terrorist activity recently and it is feared that this will send more Islamic terrorists fleeing to Algeria for sanctuary. As inhospitable as Algeria is for Islamic terrorists the situations in Libya, Mali and Tunisia are becoming even more unpleasant. Algeria has always had problems with its land borders, which are 6,343 kilometers long and include frontiers with seven countries. Moreover most of these borderlands are in the thinly occupied desert. Before aircraft was invented it was impossible to secure these borders. But even with aircraft a tightly sealed border remains impossible. Libya, Mali and Tunisia comprise 52 percent of Algeria’s borders and the 1.376 kilometer long Mali border is particularly troublesome since it is all desert and very popular with smugglers and other outlaws from the regions to the south. The smugglers, not the Islamic terrorists crossing borders are becoming a major problem. The smugglers tend to move a lot of counterfeit stuff, to the point that nearly a third of the goods offered for sale in Algeria are counterfeits. Most of these come from East Asia (mainly China) as well as a number of Arab countries. These counterfeits are often defective and, in the cases of food, medicine and spare parts for vehicles or machinery, downright dangerous. The governments of all North African countries have been ineffective at dealing with the counterfeits, in part because a lot of officials at the ports and major border crossings take bribes to allow in large shipments of counterfeit goods.

On the Egyptian border six Egyptian border guards were killed when they intercepted some armed and quite aggressive Libyan smugglers. Egyptian police believe this was a deliberate attack by a large smuggling gang upset about several recent border police actions against smuggler convoys trying to get into Egypt. Bribes don’t work as well as they used to be because the smugglers are often bringing in weapons which are sold to gangs and Islamic terrorists who are fighting the security forces on a regular basis.

June 1, 2014: The North African al Qaeda organization (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb or AQIM) has come out against the Hiftar rebels and called on all Libyans to oppose Hiftar. This announcement simply confirms the belief most Libyans now hold about Islamic terrorist groups trying to take control of Libya. Most Libyans support Hiftar.

June 2, 2014: Abdulaslam Jadallah Obeidi, the pro-Hiftar commander of the Libyan Army survived an assassination attempt outside the capital. Obeidi has been head of the army for 11 months and has been frustrated by the bickering and indecisiveness in parliament and growing support for Islamic terrorist militias among the politicians. Obeidi went over to Hiftar soon after the pro-Hiftar forces began fighting on May 16th. The Libyan Army has been rebuilding since the Kaddafi era army was destroyed in 2011. That new army is now split and many units demoralized by the appearance of the Hiftar rebels and the defection to the rebels of many of their leaders and elite units.

In the capital the newly selected (by a pro-Islamic parliament) prime minister (Ahmed Maiteg) seized some government offices with the help of an Islamic terrorist militia.

June 3, 2014: On the Egyptian border the crossing at Saloum was partially reopened. The crossing was closed 13 days ago because of the Hiftar offensive.

Earlier in the day a Red Cross official was shot dead in the coastal city of Sirte.
June 4, 2014: Outside Benghazi a suicide car bomb exploded near a place where rebel leader Khalifa Hiftar was meeting with some commanders. Three of his security guards were killed and he was slightly injured by some flying debris.

In the capital the head of intelligence resigned, saying he could not function as long as the Islamic radicals controlling Parliament feuded with the non-Islamic prime minister.

June 5, 2014: The Red Cross is suspending operations in Libya because of the recent killing of a Swiss Red Cross official in the coastal city of Sirte. The victim was in a vehicle clearly marked as Red Cross but the gunmen opened fire anyway.

June 6, 2014: The head of the Central Bank reported that the government had lost $30 billion because of ten months of interference with oil exports. Oil exports are still largely blocked by local militias demanding special favors before they will let the oil flow. Currently only about 200,000 barrels a day are being exported. The government still has about $100 billion left but there is little credit because foreign suppliers and lenders take a dim view of the ability of the current government to turn things around. Government banking officials insist that the remaining $100 billion can be made to last for at least two years. What the government does not like to dwell on is that to make existing cash reserves last spending will have to be sharply reduced. Already Libyans are seeing more and more cutbacks in government spending. Most Libyans depend on the government for jobs, food and other essentials. Without oil income the government cannot deliver. About two thirds of the $53 billion annual government budget is for salaries and benefits. A growing number of government workers are having their pay or benefits delayed so that more essential issues (like food imports) can be attended to. The government reserves are not all cash and it takes time to convert some of those assets into cash. The government is also warning people that a lot of Kaddafi era subsidies will have to go in order to keep the economy going. Such a move would be very unpopular. Kaddafi provided a lot of stuff at very low prices. Like loaves of bread for a few pennies. Fuel and electricity was also sold far below cost as were airline, bus and train tickets. Another problem is the many people who collect a government paycheck who don’t do any work, or even show up for work. Changing all these bad habits is very difficult. The greed, Islamic terrorism and sense of entitlement that is so widespread in Libya also means that foreign investors are not interested because Libyans make inefficient and troublesome employees. Libya is no place to create wealth but it is an ideal place to squander it. The basic problem is that Libyans have proven unable to agree on how to handle their oil wealth. The tribes living where the oil comes from want a larger share. Actually, everyone wants more, for one reason or another. In the last year various local militias near the oil fields and export terminals have seized these facilities halted most (over 70 percent by the end of 2013 and over 85 percent now) oil exports. All this was largely unexpected because at the start of 2013 oil production was at 1.4 million barrels a day and nearly back to normal. Then greed got the best of many factions who decided their loyalties were more to themselves than to Libya as a whole. It’s been downhill since then. Before the 2011 revolution oil accounted for over 90 percent of government revenue and over 70 percent of GDP. With over $30 billion in oil revenue lost so far, eventually there will be no way to pay for essential imports, like food. These shortages have become more widespread and severe and that is driving many people to either back the government or use more desperate measures to grab whatever they can.

June 8, 2014: The three week offensive by rebel leader Khalifa Hiftar continues. In the capital pro and anti Hiftar mobs clashed while armed Hiftar supporters in Benghazi continued fighting Islamic terrorists groups that support the existing government. Hiftar is trying to get organized all the militias and armed forces units that have joined his cause. Unified command is one big advantage he has
over the many Islamic and tribal militias that oppose unity and peace. Hiftar is representing the majority of Libyans who want peace and prosperity, not endless bickering and lack of national unity.

In Benghazi the Islamic terrorist militias have lost control of the streets and are on the defensive. Much of the city is again a war zone because for all their faults the Islamic terrorist groups imposed a form of law (Islamic law) and order (the Islamic terrorist gunmen were less likely to rob, rape and generally misbehave) in the neighborhoods they controlled. A major challenge for the pro-Hiftar groups is to restore order, which is one thing all Libyans can agree on.

The most important goal is control of the oil facilities, the central bank and the network of government offices that pay government employees and import goods for distribution to most Libyans. While not all Libyans support Hiftar, most do support restoration of the Kaddafi era welfare system and the oil revenues that pay for it. This was an efficient way to distribute most of the oil income so that most Libyans benefitted from it. Most Libyans became dependent on these benefits and are angry at anyone who is harming this system. The Islamic terrorist militias sense they are facing a real threat because of the widespread hostility they now face. The Islamic terrorists are quickly making alliances with each other. Before this most Islamic terrorist groups were feuding with one other. One of the things that annoys most Libyans is the lack of unity among the Islamic terrorist groups, each of whom considers themselves the anointed (by God) leader of an Islamic renaissance. This is a common pattern and the resulting feuds and outright wars between Islamic terrorist factions is a major reason why these groups rarely achieve much success.

One motivation for Hiftar was the growing strength of Islamic terrorist groups in politics. For three years the Islamic conservatives, radicals and terrorists were well enough organized to prevent the parliament (the GNC or General National Congress) from creating a new government that controlled the entire country. Increasingly Islamic radicals were intimidating secular or moderate Islamic politicians into either being silent to supporting the establishment of an Islamic state (in effect, a religious dictatorship). The big problem with that is that Kaddafi always pretended that his decades’ long dictatorship was an Islamic state. Libyans don’t want another Kaddafi. The Islamic politicians were a minority in the GNC but very active and disruptive. The Islamic politicians persuaded the parliament to hold new elections on June 25th. Hiftar wants to eliminate the power of Islamic terrorist groups to rig elections before another national election is held. Thus the June 25th elections will probably not take place. Meanwhile since May 18th Islamic terrorist militiamen have prevented parliament from meeting.

The GNC was originally formed in mid-2012 to create a new constitution for the country to vote on and rule until that was done. At the end of 2013 the deadlocked GNC extended its power for another year. This was seen by many Libyans as an illegal act. The GNC pointed out that separatist activity in the east prevented any national vote and that had to be dealt with before a constitution could be completed and approved. This was an impossible situation for the GNC and the Islamic radicals were hoping to take advantage of it. The various factions in the GNC could not agree on much, although there was a consensus that the new constitution would use Islamic (Sharia) law. This was an effort to placate the many Islamic conservative groups. This made local Christians (native Copts, who have been Christian and present for 2,000 years and are five percent of the population) nervous. The GNC, now that it has been persuaded to be more Islamic, is now being defended by Islamic radical and terrorist militias and some tribal and more secular groups. The GNC also has the support of most Islamic radical groups, the largest of which is Ansar al Sharia in Benghazi. This group was responsible for the 2012 attack that killed the American ambassador. Many of the militias in Misrata (east of Tripoli) militias support GNC, but many back Hiftar or are neutral. Because the GNC has been hijacked
by the Islamic radicals Hiftar sees it as illegitimate. Even the Islamic terrorists don’t trust the parliament/GNC. In short, there is no government, just chaos.

In the capital the parliament, the politicians sense that Hiftar wants to force new elections that would be free of meddling by Islamic terrorist militias and this would cost most members of parliament their jobs. To get around this parliament is trying to force the acceptance of a new prime minister who would openly back the Islamic terrorist militias. Many members of parliament are “Islamic” to one degree or another and the prospect of losing their jobs has caused many of them to back the minority of pro-Islamic terrorist members offering to back a new prime minister (Ahmed Maiteg) who would be able to mobilize some government forces and most Islamic terrorist groups against the upstart Hiftar rebels. However the April 28 vote to make Maiteg prime minister succeeded in part because of threats against Maiteg opponents. This was accompanied by armed Islamic terrorist militiamen prominently moving around the parliament compound. Many members of parliament insist this vote for Maetig was rigged and invalid.

The basic problem here is that most Libyans are fed up with all the Islamic terrorist and tribal militias who are out for themselves and don’t really care what happens to the country as a whole. General Hiftar promises to change all that and has a growing number of armed supporters to help him impose law and order and unity on the country.

Hiftar called for the formation of a Presidential Council to take over from the pro-Islamic parliament and organize new elections. The current interim prime minister refuses to accept the authority of the new prime minister (Maiteg) parliament has selected and called on the courts to decide which prime minister actually was in control. The court said it would make a ruling by June 9th. Neither side is likely to accept whatever the ruling is and the pro-Islamic groups are growing despondent and desperate. Pro-Hiftar forces continue to gain control of more and more of the country. Many senior government officials are openly backing Hiftar. That can be dangerous. Assassination is a popular weapon for Islamic terrorists and they are using it against pro-Hiftar officials and militia leader with increasing frequency.

Hiftar supporters in Benghazi have discovered a Sudanese operation to supply some Islamic terrorist groups in the city with weapons and ammo. Sudanese transports secretly flew the stuff into Benghazi airport. The staff at the airport were bribed or intimidated into keeping quiet about the operation. Some Sudanese officials also flew in to meet with Islamic terrorist militia leaders.

June 9, 2014: The supreme court ruled the recent election of Ahmed Maiteg as prime minister to be unconstitutional. Maiteg promptly resigned.

Former army general Khalifa Hiftar agreed to have him men observe a ceasefire on the 25th, the day national parliamentary elections are to be held. None of the Islamic terrorist militias Hiftar is fighting have agreed to halt operations for the elections and many Islamic terrorist groups oppose the elections because they believe democracy is un-Islamic.

June 10, 2014: Outside Benghazi a suicide car bomber killed himself when unable to get through a checkpoint manned by men loyal to Hifter. Three of the Hifter gunmen were wounded.

June 11, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) a suicide car bomb went off outside a police station wounding five policemen. Fifty kilometers east of Benghazi another suicide car bomb went off at an army checkpoint, wounding six soldiers.

June 12, 2014: Across the border in Tunisia border guards fought a group of armed men coming from Libya.
Turkey has pulled its diplomats out of Benghazi and warned Turkish citizens in eastern Libya to leave the region until things calm down.

June 15, 2014: In the east the El Feel oilfield resumed production (80,000 barrels a day). El Feel had been shut down several months by a militia protesting abuses like not being paid on time.

In Benghazi officials banned car traffic at night in an effort to reduce the violence that has made life, and doing business, so difficult.

June 16, 2014: For the second time in less than a year American commandos visited Libya and seized a wanted Islamic terrorist off the street. The latest incident occurred “somewhere near Benghazi” and involved some FBI agents and local operatives in addition to the team of SOCOM (Special Operations Command) operatives (SEALs). The man taken, Ahmed Abu Khattala, is a leader in local Islamic terrorist group Ansar al Sharia and has openly bragged about his role in the September 11, 2012 attack on a U.S. diplomatic facility in Benghazi that led to the death of the U.S. ambassador to Libya and three other Americans. Khattala later changed his story and insisted he was only on the scene to help rescue the ambassador. Libya, which was not given advance warning of this arrest, protested that the operation was a violation of their sovereignty. The U.S. replied that the mission was a legitimate act of self-defense in that Libya has been providing many Islamic terrorists de facto sanctuary because of the Libyan governments’ inability to crack down on the activities of the Islamic terrorist groups. The U.S. was able to pull off the operation despite the Libyan government still being upset about one in October, 2013 that grabbed another wanted terrorist. This time around the Americans had the benefit of former army general Khalifa Hiftar and his coalition of tribal militias and army units fighting against Islamic terrorists groups (like Ansar al Sharia) in and around Benghazi. Not all Libyans consider attacks on leaders of Islamic terrorist groups an illegal act. Ansar al Sharia is apparently still trying to figure out how the Americans tracked down Khattala. Recently Khattala has split his time between running a construction business and leading Ansar al Sharia gunmen in fighting Hiftars men.

June 20, 2014: In Benghazi 70 Egyptian trucks and their drivers were released after having been seized at gunpoint several days earlier. The trucks were taken by a militia that was demanding Egypt release one of their associates who was prosecuted in Egypt for smuggling and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

In Benghazi a group of gunmen attacked the port area for several hours. The attackers were driven off and six people were wounded. The attackers were believed to be Islamic terrorists angry at the continued attacks organized by general Hiftar, who is seeking to shut down all Islamic terrorist groups in Libya. The latest Hiftar move was to fire on boats smuggling in weapons for Islamic terrorist groups. Some Islamic terrorists apparently believe port personnel were cooperating with Hiftar, which may be true as most Benghazi residents back Hiftar, not the Islamic terrorists.

Parliament approved a 2014 budget of $48 billion. This is based on oil selling for an average $100 a barrel and Libyan shipments averaging 800,000 barrels a day. So far this year shipments have been less than a third of that, but the government expects to settle the disputes with groups blockading ports and oilfields and average 800,000 barrels a day for the entire year. The budget assumes a deficit of $8 billion. The government had already lost $32 billion because of 11 months of interference with oil exports. Oil exports are still largely blocked by local militias demanding special favors before they will let the oil flow. Currently only about 100,000 barrels a day are being exported. The government still has about $100 billion left but there is little credit because foreign suppliers and lenders take a dim view of the ability of the current government to turn things around. Government banking officials insist that the remaining $100 billion can be made to last for at least two years.
What the government does not like to dwell on is that to make existing cash reserves last spending will have to be sharply reduced. This year the overall cuts are about ten percent. Already Libyans are seeing more and more cutbacks in government spending. Most Libyans depend on the government for jobs, food and other essentials. Without oil income the government cannot deliver and most Libyans will experience a sharply reduced standard of living. About two thirds of the annual government budget is for salaries and benefits. A growing number of government workers are having their pay or benefits delayed so that more essential issues (like food imports) can be attended to. The government reserves are not all cash and it takes time to convert some of those assets into cash.

The government is also warning people that a lot of Kaddafi era subsidies will have to go in order to keep the economy alive. Eliminating subsidies would be very unpopular. Kaddafi provided a lot of stuff at very low prices. Like loaves of bread for a few pennies. Fuel and electricity was also sold far below cost as were airline, bus and train tickets. Another problem is the many people who collect a government paycheck who don’t do any work, or even show up for work. Changing all these bad habits is very difficult. The greed, Islamic terrorism and sense of entitlement that is so widespread in Libya also means that foreign investors are not interested because Libyans make inefficient and troublesome employees. Libya is no place to create wealth but it is an ideal place to squander it. The basic problem is that Libyans have proved unable to agree on how to handle their oil wealth. The tribes living where the oil comes from want a larger share. Actually, everyone wants more, for one reason or another. In the last year various local militias near the oil fields and export terminals have seized these facilities halted most (over 70 percent by the end of 2013 and over 85 percent now) oil exports. All this was largely unexpected because at the start of 2013 oil production was at 1.4 million barrels a day and nearly back to normal. Then greed got the best of many factions who decided their loyalties were more to themselves than to Libya as a whole. It’s been downhill since then. Before the 2011 revolution oil accounted for over 90 percent of government revenue and over 70 percent of GDP. With over $32 billion in oil revenue lost so far, eventually there will be no way to pay for essential imports, like food. These shortages have become more widespread and severe that is driving many people to either back the government or use more desperate measures to grab whatever they can.

June 21, 2014: In the east (Hariga) oil export operations were resumed after a two month halt because security personnel shut the place down and demanded back pay. Once this port is in full operation daily oil shipments will rise to 270,000 barrels.

June 22, 2014: Rebel general Khalifa Hiftar accused foreign workers from Turkey and Qatar of spying and ordered those in eastern Libya (east of Sirte) out of the country within 48 hours or risk arrest. Turkey and Qatar denied the charge or that they were supporting Islamic terrorists but began arranging to get hundreds of their citizens (most of them working as specialists) as a precaution.

June 25, 2014: Only 19 percent of eligible voters and 27 percent of registered voters showed up for the second parliamentary elections since Kaddafi was overthrown in 2011. It seems that voters were discouraged by all the violence, factionalism and poor performance of those elected the first time around. While security was good in most of the country, there was violence in Benghazi. There Islamic terrorists ambushed an army convoy, killing four and wounding twenty. Elsewhere in the city a prominent lawyer and opponent of Kaddafi was murdered, apparently by five heavily armed Islamic terrorists upset with her views on women and criticism of Islamic radicalism. The attackers shot their way into a guarded residential compound. In many areas where Islamic terrorists were active there was no voting at all. It was simply too dangerous. There was voting in most of Benghazi although three soldiers guarding polling places were killed.
June 26, 2014: The government announced that the newly elected parliament will meet August 1st in Benghazi. Despite the violence in Benghazi the government believes that by having many major government operations there will contribute to pacifying the city.

Despite agreements with protestors at shut down oilfields and export ports oil shipments this month are running at a record low of only 100,000 barrels a day. In western Libya protestors demanding more government benefits have been shutting down the refineries on and off for nearly a year now. This has caused growing problems for consumers because all sorts of fuels are frequently in short supply. While over 70 percent of refined petroleum products are imported criminals and militias often seize shipments sent to gas stations and fuel distributors. These problems with fuel are causing a lot of public anger.

June 27, 2014: The five week offensive by rebel leader Khalifa Hiftar has moved into Benghazi itself with militias and troops loyal to Hiftar making air and ground attacks on militia controlled neighborhoods in the city. Many army units have joined Hiftar, providing him with eight fighter bombers and four helicopter gunships plus numerous artillery weapons and armored vehicles. Hiftar spends a lot of time organizing all the militias and armed forces units that have joined his cause. Unified command is one big advantage he has over the many Islamic and tribal militias that oppose unity and peace. Hiftar is representing the majority of Libyans who want peace and prosperity, not endless bickering and lack of national unity. Hiftar says it will take until the end of the year to complete his plan to destroy the Islamic terror and tribal militias. He points to the steady advance of his forces and the sharp decline in assassinations of government officials and those who oppose the Islamic terrorists. At the same time there has been an increase in the number of Islamic terrorist leaders being killed and people in Benghazi not that the Islamic terrorist gunmen have been less active in harassing ordinary citizens. Hiftar is popular with his armed followers because he uses tactics that minimize friendly casualties.

June 29, 2014: Two Tunisian diplomats were freed by an Islamic terrorist militia after being held for three months. Their captors had demanded the release of Islamic terrorists from Tunisian prison in return for the two diplomats but the Tunisian government refused to do this. Other arrangements, the details of which were not made public, were made. Apparently this involved cash payments to tribal and militia leaders to make the release happen.

July 10, 2014: The UN announced it was shutting down many of its operations in Libya because of the worsening security situation. This is the tip of the iceberg as in the coastal cities, especially Tripoli and Benghazi, criminals and militia members (it’s often hard to tell them apart) are increasingly acting with impunity and threatening even senior, and well-guarded people (like government officials, militia leaders and powerful crime bosses, not to mention foreign aid workers and foreign workers in general). This dramatic drop in security is a primary recruiting tool for general Hiftar’s forces.

July 13, 2014: In Tripoli the pro-Islamic terrorist Misrata militia attacked the main airport, which has been controlled by the Zintan militia since 2011. Over the next few days Misrata fired dozens of rockets at the airport, damaging 20 of the 31 airliners stuck at the airport when flight operations were suspended on the 13th. At least one of the damaged airliners was a total loss and five or six others were heavily damaged and probably out of action for months. The control tower was also hit and before the airport can resume operations replacement equipment for the tower has to be imported, to replace gear damaged by the fighting. There is still a major airport in Benghazi and several smaller ones along the coast that can handle large airliners.
July 14, 2014: Libya and Tunisia agreed to operate joint border patrols to inhibit the movement of Islamic terrorists between the two countries. Tunisia has its Islamic terrorists largely under control and the biggest problem is Libyan Islamic terrorist entering Tunisia to reinforce their much depleted Tunisian brethren.

July 15, 2014: Oil production has increased to 588,000 barrels a day, 42 percent of normal output. This is a high for 2014 and is threatened by various militias talking about blocking production in order to get a larger share of oil money. A month ago production was closer to 100,000 barrels a day but government negotiators have had a lot of success in the last few weeks getting various militias to stop blockading production and shipping facilities. Unfortunately these deals often collapse later and new pressure groups decide to try and blockade something and succeed at it.

July 17, 2014: The government has asked the UN to provide peacekeepers to help protect Libyan oil production and exporting facilities. Currently most of these are controlled by tribal militias demanding a larger share of the oil income. Nearly all the tribes are demanding more oil income for themselves than is available. Negotiating a compromise has proved impossible so far. The government, which is now controlled by anti-Islamic terrorists parties, fears that without UN intervention Libya will cease to function. The government also wants UN help training soldiers and police. Such training has already been under way by the U.S. and other Western countries since 2013. But many of the trained troops return the Libya and then go join a militia (usually a tribal one) instead of the army or police. For too many Libyans tribe or religion takes precedence over national loyalty.

The Misrata and Zintan militias fighting over control of the Tripoli airport agreed to a ceasefire. While the UN can’t do much to help out here, NATO and especially the U.S. can. But American help enrages the Islamic terrorist militias as it’s a core part of Islamic terrorist beliefs that the U.S. in particular and the West in general is at war with Islam and must be destroyed. The government may have to bite the bullet on this one because only the Western powers have the resources to stabilize Libyan. However, even the West, which sees Libya as in danger or turning into a major Islamic terrorist sanctuary, may lack the popular and political will to step in.

July 18, 2014: The ceasefire between the two major militias in the capital (the Islamic terrorist Misrata militia and the anti-Islamic terrorist Zintan militia) fell apart because the Misrata leaders insisted the ceasefire only covered fighting at the airport, not in the rest of the city. The Zintan militia is actually a coalition of two dozen militias from western Libya. The Misrata militia is also a coalition and is loosely allied with several smaller Islamic terrorist militias from all over the country. These smaller Islamic terrorist groups are mainly what is fighting the Hiftar Libyan National Army in eastern Libya. Some pro-government militias are also opposing Hiftar in Benghazi and losing. Some of these militias have already switched sides and accepted control by Hiftar.

Many army units have joined Hiftar, providing him with some fighter bombers and helicopter gunships plus numerous artillery weapons and armored vehicles. Hiftar spends a lot of time organizing all the militias and armed forces units that have joined his cause or at least become allied with it (like Zintan). Unified command is one big advantage he has over the many Islamic and tribal militias that oppose unity and peace. Hiftar is representing the majority of Libyans who want peace and prosperity, not endless bickering and lack of national unity. Hiftar says it will take until the end of the year to complete his plan to destroy the Islamic terror and tribal militias. He points to the steady advance of his forces and the sharp decline in assassinations of government officials and those who oppose the Islamic terrorists. At the same time there has been an increase in the number of Islamic terrorist leaders being killed and people in Benghazi note that the Islamic terrorist gunmen have
been less active in harassing ordinary citizens. Hiftar is popular with his armed followers because he uses tactics that minimize friendly casualties.

Defeating the Islamic terrorist groups is only half the battle. Once the terrorists are gone there is still the problem of Libyan tribes not getting along with each other. Each tribe demands more than other tribes will agree to. Compromise does not come easily and tribal leaders have to deal with followers driven by a well-developed sense of entitlement. There is not enough oil wealth to satisfy the demands of all Libyans and that may prove to be a more difficult problem than the Islamic terrorists.

The Islamic terrorists are seen as a threat to tribal leadership, not just because the Islamic terrorist leaders have been disdainful of tribal leaders but because the Islamic terrorists often threatened tribal leaders with violence unless the tribes submit to Islamic rule. This was reflected in the June 25th parliament elections, which saw the pro-Islamic terrorist groups lose their majority (something the Islamic terrorists are not willing to accept). While the Islamic terrorist groups are more fanatic and ruthless, Hiftar has provided tribal militias with military training and professional leadership. The only edge Islamic terrorists have is their ability to call on foreign Islamic terrorists to come help. This just increases the violence and number of casualties. As was seen in neighboring Algeria and Egypt, when faced with Islamic terrorists as a foe there is no negotiation option; only a fight to the death. This is going to get messy before it gets better.

One response to this looming disaster is the Libyan National Army. This militia coalition was organized by former general Khalifa Hiftar earlier this year and has grown in strength and area controlled since it began fighting Islamic terrorist militias last May. Hiftar first moved into Benghazi itself with militias and troops loyal to Hiftar making air and ground attacks on militia controlled neighborhoods in the city. This has cleared most Islamic terrorist groups out of the city. Now Hiftar is building up his forces (especially his alliance with the Zintan militias) in Tripoli. Tripoli is where Islamic terrorist militias are concentrating forces in preparation for an effort to take control of the national capital and halt Hiftar. Libyan Islamic terrorists fighting in Syria have been called home to fight and asked to bring any foreign volunteers with them to the Hiftar forces. The Islamic terrorists need all the help they can get because Hiftar is working in cooperation with many powerful tribal leaders, who have always been hostile to the Islamic terrorists (who tend to operate like warlords and despise tribal leaders as “part of the problem”). Hiftar also has some support from Libyan militias, especially the Zintan coalition in the west. Hiftar also appeals to the Libyan military and many troops and their commanders have already defected to Hiftar.

July 19, 2014: The inability to compromise and cooperate has crippled the economy and the ability to govern the country. With various militias holding oilfields and export terminals hostage the main source of national income has, so far this year, averaged less than a third of normal. Thus essential imports (especially food and medical supplies) are being paid for with cash reserves. These reserves will only last a year or two before most of the population becomes destitute and faces starvation. More Libyans are coming to accept this possibility but there is still no widespread willingness to compromise and work out a solution to this deadlock. The final results of the June 25th election are being released on the 20th and this is expected to generate more violence as the Islamic terrorist militias oppose the expected result (that the Islamic radical parties have lost their majority).

August 4, 2014: The newly elected parliament met in Tobruk for the first time and swore in members and began the process of electing leaders. Over 80 percent of the 188 members of the new parliament have shown up in Tobruk. The new parliament is recognized by the UN and most major nations, even though these countries have shut down their embassies in Tripoli and withdrawn their diplomats.
August 10, 2014: UK’s previously collaboration with Muammar al-Quadhafi on ‘Rendition of Libyan dissidents disclosed. This makes liars of Tony Blair, David Milliband, Jack Straw, Brown and all the other prominent New labour hypocrites: On Sunday, one of the victims, Abdul Hakim Belhaj, now commander of the anti-Gaddafi militia in Tripoli demanded an apology from London and Washington and said he was considering suing over his rendition to Tripoli and subsequent torture. For several years, senior MI5 and MI6 officers have sought to deny that their agencies have been guilty even of complicity in the rendition operations mounted by the US after 9/11, and the subsequent torture of the victims.

The discovery of the papers suggests that on one occasion, at least, the British ran their own "rendition to torture" operation. The victim was named by the CIA as Abu Munthir. He is thought to have been a man who used this nom de guerre while living in the UK, where he is said to have encouraged a group of British Muslims to mount a bomb attack on an unspecified target in the south-east of England. The plotters were under surveillance by MI5 and counterterrorism detectives at the time that Abu Munthir was detained in Hong Kong in March 2004 before being.

August 11, 2014: In Egypt several thousand additional soldiers and dozens of armored vehicles have been sent to the Libyan border in the last week. This is all to deal with the growing smuggling activity there, much of it involving Islamic terrorist groups bringing in weapons stolen from army warehouses left unguarded during the 2011 revolution. Those weapons have been selling briskly on the black market in Egypt. The customers are gangsters, Islamic terrorists and people seeking some illegal protection.

August 12, 2014: The newly elected parliament agreed that the next president would be chosen by direct election rather than by parliament. There was no agreement when this election would be held or on how to deal with the growing militia violence. In Tripoli unidentified gunmen murdered the police chief.

August 13, 2014: The newly elected parliament, meeting in Tobruk, called on the UN or NATO to intervene. Parliament also voted for all militias to disband and withdrew all official recognition for militias. No one has expressed any interest in intervening and the militias are not paying attention to the new parliament either.

August 16, 2014: A ship hired by the Filipino government evacuated 449 Filipinos from Libya. This ship will pick up another 610 Filipinos at another Libyan port and take them all to Malta, where they can fly home. The government ordered a mandatory evacuation of Filipinos from war torn Libya on July 20th and has hired enough ships to get out the 3,000 who have agreed to leave. Some 13,000 Filipinos work in Libya and the fighting is most acute in the two largest cities (Tripoli and Benghazi). This is where most Filipino workers are fleeing from. The loss of some 3,000 departing Filipinos has crippled the Libyan health care system. That’s because most of the medical professionals in the hospitals are from the Philippines (60 percent) and India (20 percent) and most of them are leaving. Both countries have ordered all their citizens out because of the growing chaos and violence. Without the foreign doctors, nurses and technicians most hospitals would have only a few such essential staff and would not be able to handle current patients much less new ones from the fighting. Despite the evacuation order most (over 75 percent) of the Filipino workers in Libya are staying, for now. These workers are in places where there is little, or no, violence.

August 18, 2014: Unidentified jets again bombed Islamic terrorist positions in Tripoli.

August 19, 2014: In the eastern city of Derna an Islamic terrorist group used a sports stadium for a public execution. The victim was an Egyptian accused of killing a Libyan. The execution was videoed and posted on the Internet. In Tripoli rockets were fired into an affluent residential neighborhood,
killing three people. Elsewhere in Tripoli government forces shut down two TV stations that had been supporting Islamic terrorist groups since July.

August 21, 2014: LIBYA: Tunisia, Egypt close airspace to planes from Libya.

Tunisia and Egypt banned flights to or from Libya, except for Tobruk. There is fear that all major airports in Libya, except the one at Tobruk, are subject to attack by Islamic terrorist militias.

Tunisia and Egypt have decided to close their airspace to aircraft coming from Libya, the Libyan Press Agency, LANA, Thursday quoted airport sources as saying. Though no reason has been given for the action, it is not unrelated with fears over the security situation in Libya, which has been in turmoil since the 2011 uprising that toppled long-time dictator Mouammar Khadafi. The Tripoli Airport has been closed since 13 July following ongoing clashes between rival militias who are fighting for the control of the facility. Only three major airports in Libya - Maitigua in Tripoli, Misrata, 220 km to the east of the capital and Tobruk - are currently operating. However, the decision by Egypt and Tunisia to close their airspace to flights from Libya has also affected flights to the functioning airports.

August 22, 2014: Unidentified jets again bombed Islamic terrorist positions in Tripoli. Islamic terrorists accused the UAE (United Arab Emirates) and Egypt of being behind these air raids but offered no proof.

August 23, 2014: Islamic terrorist group Fajr Libya, from Misrata) seized control of most of the airport and over the next two days most of the key airport buildings could be seen burning. Insurance companies fear that the airport damage will be more than a billion dollars (to structures and airliners stranded there). Zintan militias had long controlled the Tripoli airport, which they are trying to defend from Islamic terrorist militias. The government has been trying for over a year to get the militias out of the airport, where the militiamen are more interested in extortion and stealing than in providing any security. Fajr Libya also controls most of Benghazi, along with Ansar al Sharia.

August 24, 2014: Unidentified jets again bombed Islamic terrorist positions in Tripoli. General Hiftar, who has long had the support of what’s left of the Libyan Air Force, claimed responsibility for these attacks. No one else (NATO or Arab) has taken responsibility. Foreign aviation experts doubt that the Libyan air force could have made these quite accurate night attacks. The Libyan Air Force never demonstrated this degree of competence when it was fighting the rebels who overthrew Kaddafi in 2011.

Islamic terrorists attacked and destroyed TV station in Tripoli that opposed Islamic terrorists.

All the fighting in the last month has left up to a 500 dead, many of them civilians caught in the crossfire. This is not as violent as Syria or Iraq, but more like what is going on in Nigeria and Somalia, which also suffer from Islamic terrorist violence (Boko Haram and al Shabaab respectively). Over a million Libyans and foreign workers have fled their homes (and often the country) so far, to escape the violence in Tripoli and Benghazi.

Despite all the chaos in Tripoli and Benghazi the government has managed to get oil exports going again. Oil production has increased to over 500,000 barrels a day which is about 40 percent of normal output. This is a high for 2014 and is threatened by various militias talking about blocking production in order to get a larger share of oil money. In June production was closer to 100,000 barrels a day but government negotiators have had a lot of success since then getting various militias to stop blockading production and shipping facilities. Unfortunately these deals often collapse later and new pressure groups decide to try and blockade something and succeed at it.
The main problem in Libya is many armed groups that cannot agree with each other. There appear to be over 1,500 different armed groups in Libya. Most are local and exist mainly for self-defense. Only a minority (under ten percent) of these militias are involved in the current violence in Tripoli and Benghazi. Most of the militias are organized into coalitions, mainly for mutual support and because of some shared beliefs. The largest of these is the Misrata Union of Revolutionaries. This group has over 30,000 armed members and about 200 different militias in and around the city of Misrata. Then there is Ansar al Sharia, the largest Islamic terrorist group in Benghazi. This group was responsible for the 2012 attack that killed the American ambassador and has most of its strength in the east (around Benghazi). The al Zintan Revolutionaries Military Council is based in the mountains southwest of Tripoli and around the Berber town of Zintan. The LROR (Libyan Revolutionary Operations Room) is a pro-government militia that has been trying to maintain control in Tripoli and Benghazi. The February 17 Martyrs Brigade is the largest and most dangerous Islamic terrorist coalition in and around Benghazi. In theory February 17 Martyrs Brigade works for the government as they are on the government payroll. At the moment this coalition has divided loyalties. Most militias are not associated with a coalition and primarily involved with local matters.

Fajr Libya has asked the Islamic terrorist dominated GNC (originally formed in mid-2012 to create a new constitution for the country to vote on and rule until that was done) to reform and meet in Tripoli to run the country. The revived GNC is supposed to have its first meeting today. The GNC was replaced in June by a new parliament. At the end of 2013 the deadlocked GNC extended its power for another year. This was seen by many Libyans as an illegal act. The GNC pointed out that separatist activity in the east prevented any national vote and that had to be dealt with before a constitution could be completed and approved. This was an impossible situation for the GNC and the Islamic radicals were hoping to take advantage of it. The various factions in the GNC could not agree on much, although there was a consensus that the new constitution would use Islamic (Sharia) law. This was an effort to placate the many Islamic conservative groups. This made local Christians (native Copts, who have been Christian and present for 2,000 years and are five percent of the population) nervous. The GNC has become popular with Islamic terrorist militias and some tribal and more secular groups. The GNC has long had the support of most Islamic radical groups, especially Ansar al Sharia in Benghazi. This group was responsible for the 2012 attack that killed the American ambassador. Many of the militias from Misrata (east of Tripoli) support GNC, but many also back rebel general Hiftar or are neutral. Because the GNC has been hijacked by the Islamic radicals Hiftar sees it as illegitimate. Even many Islamic terrorists don’t trust the parliament or the GNC. The Hiftar coalition of tribal militias and army units is not large enough to take on all the Islamic terrorist militias but continues to make progress in Benghazi. Hiftar supports the new parliament and rule of law.

August 25, 2014: In Egypt the foreign ministers of Libya, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Chad and Niger met to discuss what to do about the growing chaos (and apparent civil war) in Libya. About the only thing everyone could agree on was to not get involved. Egypt proposed forming an armed intervention force and soon discovered that no one else was interested.

August 25, 2014: The newly elected (and much more anti-Islamic terrorist) parliament is now operating in Tobruk, far away from the violence in the two largest cities; Tripoli (the capital and 1,600 kilometers west of Tobruk) and Benghazi (in the east and long dominated by Islamic terrorist groups.) Parliament has condemned the militias, especially the Islamic terrorist ones and called for NATO (or any international body, like the UN) to come back and help impose peace. The parliament has singled out Islamic terrorist groups Fajr Libya (based in Misrata as the Misrata Union of Revolutionaries) and
Ansar al Sharia (based in Benghazi) as most responsible for the current violence. Most government officials have moved from Tripoli to Tobruk. Only 19 percent of eligible voters and 27 percent of registered voters showed up for the June 25th parliamentary elections (the since Kaddafi was overthrown in 2011). Voters were discouraged by all the violence, factionalism and poor performance of those elected the first time around.

August 26, 2014: Those behind the mysterious nighttime air strikes against Islamic terrorists in Libya were finally revealed (by the U.S.) as coming from Egypt, using American built UAE F-16Es. The last of these attacks occurred on August 24th as “unidentified” jets again bombed Islamic terrorist positions in Tripoli. A local leader, general Hiftar, who has long had the support of what’s left of the Libyan Air Force, claimed responsibility for these attacks. No one else (NATO or Arab) had taken responsibility. Foreign aviation experts doubted that the Libyan air force could have made these quite accurate night attacks. The Libyan Air Force never demonstrated this degree of competence when it was fighting the rebels who overthrew Kaddaфи in 2011. This may have prompted the U.S. to reveal, two days later, who was behind the attacks, which began on August 21st. This was not the first time UAE F-16Es had flown over Libya. They did so in 2011, but did not drop bombs. The West has long pressed Arab states to use their extensive air power resources to attack Islamic terrorists in the region, rather than keep asking Western countries to do it for them. The problem here was always that the idea of “Arabs bombing Arabs” was very unpopular. Apparently fear of Islamic terrorism in the neighborhood has changed a lot of minds. Even so the UAE and Egypt kept insisting they were not behind the air attacks.

August 28, 2014: Prime Minister Abdullah al Thinni and his cabinet resigned. This was in accordance with the constitution and allowed the new parliament to select new ministers and form a new government. Thinni was the leading candidate to be the next prime minister and was reappointed to that position after a few days discussion with the new parliament. Thinni has the support of the UN and most foreign nations.

August 29, 2014: In the east (Baida) a Libyan warplane crashed. Islamic terrorists took credit but the government said the aircraft came down because of a technical problem. The warplane was supporting the forces of general Hiftar in Benghazi.

August 30, 2014: Niger has allowed the United States to establish a surveillance base in the north, where Niger has borders with Algeria, Libya and Chad. This area has long been a key transit route through the Sahara Desert and is heavily used by smugglers and Islamic terrorists. The United States has been operating UAVs out of Niger for several years now and some of these are now believed operating over Libya.

August 31, 2014: The U.S. denied reports that militiamen had taken over the abandoned American embassy in Tripoli. Photos showing up allegedly showing such a takeover were misleading and were of the adjacent residential compound, not the embassy compound itself. The U.S. says the embassy is being guarded and so far is secure.

September 1, 2014: The government admitted that it had lost control of the capital (Tripoli). Efforts are still being made to get government employees and records out of Tripoli to Tobruk. The situation in Tripoli is chaotic with no one group in control of the entire city, or even major parts. There is no law and very little order.

September 2, 2014: A warplane crashed outside Tobruk, killing three and wounding nine. Most of the injuries were on the ground. The crash occurred during a ceremony to honor an air force pilot killed in a crash last week.
The Algerian border remains closed and despite that Libyan Islamic terrorists and smugglers are still trying to move people and goods in and out. The increased Algerian border security recently led to the discovery of a Libyan Islamic terrorist group that had turned to people smuggling. Some 200 Syrians were arrested near the Libyan border, along with the Libyans they had paid to get them to the Algerian coast and onto a boat that would take them to Europe and salvation via refugee status. This smuggling has become big business and most of it was coming via Libya because there the border security was the weakest in North Africa. But now the Libyan coast is more heavily patrolled and many Libyan coastal towns are unsafe because of the militia violence. So Algeria becomes an attractive conduit for the smuggling, despite better border security and policing in general. Algerian police have also discovered another people smuggling operation, apparently related to the one that gets economic refugees to Europe. This one involved recruiting young men fighting for ISIL in Syria and moving them to Libya for more terrorist training and then through Algeria to southern Europe (as refugees) to carry out terror attacks. In some cases the terrorists are accompanied by wives and children. Police arrested 160 Syrians believed associated with this network.

September 6, 2014: In the southeast (Kufra) police seized a Sudanese transport when the cargo was found to be weapons and ammo. The aircraft had landed to refuel before it continued on to Tripoli. The government accused Sudan of backing the Islamic terrorists in Tripoli. Sudan has supported many Islamic terrorist groups in the region, but always denies it when caught.

September 8, 2014: In Tripoli the reconvened GNC formed its own government led by Omar al Hassi. Now the country has two prime ministers.

September 9, 2014: The Tobruk parliament passed an anti-terrorism law which basically made the militias currently fighting the government illegal. The parliament is debating whether to do the same with the rival GNC parliament.

September 11, 2014: The government denied that the UAE had carried out air attacks in Libya during August. There were no more such attacks and the UAE supports the new Libyan parliament and has arrested Libyans in the UAE who support Islamic terrorist groups in Libya.

September 12, 2014: In Benghazi general Hiftar warned the Islamic terrorist militias to disarm or face destruction as the Hiftar forces are readying a major offensive. Hiftar does have some better armed, trained and led fighters, as well as a number of militias. Hiftar also has some helicopters and warplanes. It is unclear if Hiftar has enough to really defeat the Benghazi militias. Most of the fighting recently has been around the Benghazi airport, which some Islamic terrorist militias are trying to seize.

September 13, 2014: Libya is falling apart as a nation. The key element now is the oil money, which pays for most everything. The cash from oil sales is going into the Central bank, which has not said which of the two parliaments it will answer to and is waiting for a court order. The various factions are pressuring the Central Bank and courts to favor them. All this is complicated by the fact that most of the armed groups cannot agree with each other. Most fight for their tribe or hometown. Some, especially in Benghazi, are Islamic radicals seeking a religious dictatorship that few Libyans want. There are Islamic radical groups all over the country, but mainly in Benghazi (and nearby towns) as well as (to a lesser extent) Tripoli. Many militias say they are fighting to prevent pro-Kaddafi (largely Arab) groups from taking back power. There are some pro-Kaddafi militias but they are very much a minority.

It is generally believed that Libya is becoming a failed state, similar to what happened to Somalia after the 1990 anti-government rebellion and in Afghanistan after the Russians left in 1987 and cut off support (in 1991) for the Afghan government they left behind. In Somalia Islamic terrorist groups
(mainly al Shabaab) eventually tried to take over, but failed. In Afghanistan it was the Taliban, which took over most of the country in the late 1990s, but was overthrown in late 2001 when the U.S. came to the aid of the tribes that were still fighting the Taliban. The clear lesson here is that someone will have to intervene to prevent the Islamic terrorists from gaining too much control over the country, or simply to stop the violence before the economy (oil industry) is destroyed. Somalia and Afghanistan did not have oil, or much of anything else worth exporting (except goats in Somalia and heroin in Afghanistan). At the moment no one is stepping forward to intervene, mainly because it is an expensive and thankless job. Someone may still intervene to back the government and that is what the government is hoping for.

The main cause of this is disunity is the inability of the various factions to cooperate in forming and running a national government. The GNC (General National Congress, originally formed in mid-2012 to create a new constitution for the country to vote on and rule until that was done) became popular with Islamic terrorist militias and some tribal and more secular groups. The GNC has long had the support of most Islamic radical groups, especially Ansar al Sharia in Benghazi. The radicals believed they could manipulate the GNC to form a religious dictatorship. Many of the militias from Misrata (east of Tripoli) support GNC, but many also back rebel general Hiftar or are neutral. Because the GNC has been hijacked by the Islamic radicals Hiftar sees it as illegitimate. Even many Islamic terrorists don’t trust the new parliament or the GNC either. The Hiftar coalition of tribal militias and army units is not large enough to take on all the Islamic terrorist militias but continues to battle Islamic terrorist groups in Benghazi. Hiftar supports the new parliament and rule of law.

The two largest cities (Tripoli and Benghazi) are still being fought over, but the real prize is the oil. At the moment the new parliament controls the oil fields and the oil export terminals. Production is growing and is expected to reach a million barrels a day by the end of the month and 1.5 million by the end of the year. If the oil facilities are damaged in the fighting it could take a year or more to restore production. Oil revenue is what keeps the economy going, which is one reason the oil industry has not suffered much battle damage since the original 2011 revolution. But if the oil income is interrupted because of combat damage most Libyans would be dependent on foreign charity to just survive until the repairs were made and the oil was flowing again. That could take years. All over the country local militias and tribal leaders are deciding which parliament to support. It is believed that most will follow the money, the oil money.

The main problem in Libya is many (over 1,500) armed groups that formed during the 2011 rebellion and refused to disband later. Most are local and exist mainly for self-defense. Only a minority (under ten percent) of these militias are involved in the current violence in Tripoli and Benghazi. Most of the militias are organized into coalitions, mainly for mutual support and because of some shared beliefs. The largest of these is the Fajr Libya Misrata militias. This group has over 30,000 armed members and about 200 different militias in and around the city of Misrata. Many of these men are now fighting in Tripoli. Then there is Ansar al Sharia, the largest Islamic terrorist group in Benghazi. This group was responsible for the 2012 attack that killed the American ambassador and has most of its strength in the east. The al Zintan Revolutionaries Military Council is based in the mountains southwest of Tripoli in and around the Berber town of Zintan. The LROR (Libyan Revolutionary Operations Room) is a pro-government militia that has been trying to maintain control in Tripoli and Benghazi. The February 17 Martyrs Brigade is the largest and most dangerous Islamic terrorist coalition in and around Benghazi. In theory February 17 Martyrs Brigade works for the government as they are on the government payroll. At the moment this coalition has divided loyalties. Most militias are not associated with a coalition and primarily involved with local matters.
The recently (June) elected (and much more anti-Islamic terrorist) parliament is now operating in Tobruk, far away from the violence in the two largest cities; Tripoli (the capital and 1,600 kilometers west of Tobruk) and Benghazi (470 kilometers to the east and long dominated by Islamic terrorist groups.) Parliament has condemned the militias, especially the Islamic terrorist ones and called for NATO (or any international body, like the UN) to come back and help impose peace. The parliament has singled out Islamic terrorist groups Fajr Libya and Ansar al Sharia as most responsible for the current violence. In August Fajr Libya took control of most of Tripoli. However the situation in Tripoli chaotic with dozens of militias seeking just to defend parts of the city. Fajr Libya is using terror and intimidation to get their way and this approach is turning a lot of potential allies into enemies. Many militias are “living off the land” because so many Tripoli residents have fled since 2011. This left a lot of property behind and available for looting.

Fajr Libya also asked the Islamic terrorist dominated GNC to reform and meet in Tripoli to run the country. The revived GNC has declared itself the legitimate parliament, insisting that the June vote was invalid. Only 19 percent of eligible voters and 27 percent of registered voters showed up for the June 25th parliamentary elections (the first since Kaddafi was overthrown in 2011). Voters were discouraged by all the violence, factionalism and poor performance of those elected the first time around for the GNC. But the June vote was accepted by most Libyans and the GNC was officially replaced by a new parliament. This was largely because at the end of 2013 the deadlocked GNC extended its power for another year. This was seen by many Libyans as an illegal act. The GNC pointed out that separatist activity in the east prevented any national vote and that had to be dealt with before a constitution could be completed and approved. This was an impossible situation for the GNC and the Islamic radicals were hoping to take advantage of it.

Meanwhile the commission established to create a new constitution continues to work from the eastern city of Bayda (still controlled by the new parliament) and still plans to complete their work in December and the government plans a national vote on the new constitution in March 2015. All this assumes that the Islamic terrorists and separatist tribal, ethnic and regional militias can be brought under control by then.

The fighting in Benghazi is stalemated with Ansar al Sharia unable to defeat the various anti-Islamic terrorist groups. The fighting is largely confined to Tripoli and Benghazi, and has forced over 100,000 people to flee their homes in the last few months to escape the shooting and shelling. Benghazi is in some ways more important than Tripoli because it contains the headquarters of the state owned oil operations. The government still controls this but that could change quickly.

Since 2011 over 30 percent of the population has fled Libya, most of them to neighboring Tunisia. That was easy to do because about 85 percent of Libya’s six million people live along the coast. All the fighting in the last two months has left at least a thousand dead, many of them civilians caught in the crossfire. This is not as violent as Syria or Iraq, but more like what is going on in Nigeria and Somalia, which also suffer from Islamic terrorist violence (Boko Haram and al Shabaab respectively).

Most large militias have a lot of Kaddafi era mortars, artillery and rocket launchers and like to use this stuff to fire in the general direction of whoever they are fighting. This poorly aimed fire often lands on nearby residential areas forcing civilians to flee. The fighting is not conventional, as in “front lines”, clearly identified (by uniforms and symbols) fighters (especially with the militias) and a sense of an overall plan. Most militias act like criminal gangs and their main motivations are controlling their territory and extracting cash and goods from others to sustain the militia members. Turf defense is a major source of fighting. It is all rather primitive and chaotic. The government, such as it is, at least tries to address the needs of all the people. This includes many of the militia members. The Islamic terrorist militias doing the fighting have largely (as in not always) been cut off from their
government benefits (like regular pay). In most of the country the local militias are what passes for police and their government pay is what keeps most of the militiamen on the job and quiet.

The inability of the Islamic terrorist militias to run a government (in Libya and elsewhere) limits their popularity. But there are enough young men with guns who believe, at least for the moment, in Islamic radicalism to keep the Islamic terrorist militias a threat to the country. In Tripoli and Benghazi the Islamic terrorist militias still favor ambushes, assassinations and kidnappings as opposed to attacks on organized forces (the military or some of the better run militias).

Joining the civilian refugees are (so far) over 150,000 foreign workers, who do a lot of the technical work (especially medical or oil related) and some of the harshest manual jobs. This has caused the government to become even more unresponsive.

What remains of the pre-June government has moved from Tripoli to Tobruk. The parliament is meeting on a 17,000 ton Greek ferry tied up in the port. Only 52 percent of the parliament members are in Tobruk. Most of the missing are either on their way or boycotting the new parliament for one reason or another. Other government offices are finding space where they can.

Despite all the chaos in Tripoli and Benghazi the government has managed to get oil exports going again. Oil production has increased to over 700,000 barrels a day which is about half normal output. This is a high for 2014 and is threatened by various militias talking about blocking production in order to get a larger share of oil money. In June production was closer to 100,000 barrels a day but government negotiators have had a lot of success since then getting various militias to stop blockading production and shipping facilities. Unfortunately these deals often collapse later and new pressure groups decide to try and blockade something and succeed at it.

A widely circulated rumor that Islamic terrorists had seized and removed eleven airliners at Tripoli airport proved to be false. The story speculated that the Islamic terrorists could use the airliners for suicide attacks somewhere, somehow.

September 14, 2014: The government of Libya once again accused Sudan of providing extremist Islamist militias and terror groups in Libya with weapons. Libya’s prime minister rejected Sudan’s claim that it is not supplying these groups. Libya claimed that the Sudanese transport plane which entered Libyan air space on September 7 and landed at Tripoli, was loaded with weapons at an airfield in Sudan.

September 16, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) fighting between Islamic terrorists and government forces (now including those of the former rebel general Hiftar) left at least nine dead and over twenty wounded.

September 17, 2014: Britain recently revealed that in August they had to deal with a mutiny among 300 Libyan soldiers being trained at a British base. The Libyans were selected to receive combat and leadership training so they could better train and command Libyan soldiers back in Libya. The mutiny occurred when British officers in charge of the training put three of the trainees under guard after police picked them up for being off base without permission. Then twenty other trainees went and threatened the British soldier guarding the three Libyan trainees. The British guard let the three go free rather than risk violence. Senior officers were uncertain about how to handle this insubordination given the nature of Arab military trainees.

What happened with these Libyans was not uncommon when Westerners are assigned to train Arabs to be military leaders. What these trainers run into is a collection of problems that have long made it difficult for Arab, and many other poor (and often Moslem) nations to establish democratic
governments or prosperous economies. A lot of the problem has to do with culture, especially culture influenced by Islam. There are a number of reasons for this and the most important problems are;

Most Arab countries are a patchwork of different tribes and groups, and Arab leaders survive by playing one group off against another. Loyalty is to one's group, not the nation. Most countries are dominated by a single group that is usually a minority (Bedouins in Jordan, Alawites in Syria, Sunnis in Iraq, Nejdis in Saudi Arabia). All of which means that officers are assigned not by merit but by loyalty and tribal affiliation.

September 18, 2014: Egypt has advised trucking companies to carefully choose which areas in Libya they allow their vehicles to operate. These trucks, bringing in legal goods, are subject to extortion, theft or kidnapping from the many militias operating in eastern Libya.

September 19, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) a series of assassinations in the last two days left at least ten journalists and peace group leaders dead, apparently an attempt by Islamic terrorists to silence opposition.

September 24, 2014: One of general Hiftar’s warplanes dropped a bomb near a dock in Benghazi harbor to convince the port operator that Hiftar could destroy the port facilities if the port continued to bring in weapons and other supplies for Islamic terrorist militias there.

September 26, 2014: Just across the border in Tunisia four soldiers were wounded during a clash with smugglers trying to get 30 truckloads of goods into Libya.

September 27, 2014: The Libya parliament called on the world to allow them to import weapons and to supply more military assistance, including troops and air power, to make it possible to suppress the rebel militias that control most of the country.

September 28, 2014: The Tobruk parliament swore in the prime minister and other ministers that were finally selected after weeks of negotiations.

September 29, 2014: In the east (south of Benghazi) a militia kidnapped 70 Egyptian truck drivers and demanded that the Egyptian government release one of the militia leaders who had been arrested in Egypt for smuggling and other crimes.

October 1, 2014: The army, which is loyal to the Tobruk parliament, said it would halt military operations in response to a UN call for a ceasefire. Some rebel militias agreed but the ceasefire effort quickly fell apart because most militias refused to participate and kept on fighting.

October 2, 2014: In Benghazi general Hiftar’s forces suffered over 80 casualties (including at least 13 dead) as they fought with Islamic terrorist militias. Hiftar does have some better armed, trained and led fighters, as well as a number of militia allies. It is unclear if Hiftar has enough to really defeat the Benghazi militias. Most of the fighting recently has been around the Benghazi airport, which some Islamic terrorist militias are trying to seize. Today’s violence was in part around the airport, which the Islamic terrorists continue to attack.

October 3, 2014: Libya has come apart as a nation. What matters most now is the oil money, which pays for everything. The cash from oil sales is going into the Central bank, which tends to answer to the Tobruk parliaments because that is the one with international recognition and that provides access to the international banking system. The various factions are pressuring the Central Bank and courts to favor them but it is the international community that controls the ability of Libya to buy essential (most of the food and everything else) needed to keep Libyans alive. The internationally
recognized government has set up shop in the small port city of Tobruk (1,600 kilometers east of Tripoli). What remains of the pre-June government has moved from Tripoli to Tobruk. Many other government offices moved as well and are finding space where they can. One government agency that did not move is the central bank and the rebel government and the Tobruk one are fighting over who controls more than $100 billion held by the central bank. A lot of that cash is overseas and since Tobruk has international and UN support the Tripoli rebels will have a hard time maintaining control of oil income.

The UN has also been trying, without much success, to get the major militias from Tripoli and Benghazi to join peace negotiations. This has not worked because so many of the militia leaders are unwilling to compromise and many refuse to even enter negotiations. All this was made clear as the UN sought to hold peace negotiations on September 29th in the southwestern city of Ghadames. With the failure of those talks the UN is now threatening economic sanctions against the major rebel militias and, more importantly, the leaders of those militias. Many of those leaders have moved assets and family members out of Libya. Nearly a third of the Libyan population has left the country because of the continued chaos and uncertainty.

All this is complicated by the fact that most of the armed groups cannot agree with each other. Most fight for their tribe or hometown. Some, especially in Benghazi, are Islamic radicals seeking a religious dictatorship that few Libyans want. There are radical groups all over the country, but mainly in Benghazi (and nearby towns) as well as (to a lesser extent) Tripoli. Many militias say they are fighting to prevent pro-Kaddafi (largely Arab) groups from taking back power. There are some pro-Kaddafi militias but they are very much a minority. Libya is becoming a failed state, similar to what happened to Somalia after the 1990 anti-government rebellion and in Afghanistan after the Russians left in 1987. In Somalia Islamic terrorist groups (mainly al Shabaab) eventually tried to take over, but failed. In Afghanistan it was the Taliban, which took over most of the country in the late 1990s, but was overthrown in late 2001 when the U.S. came to the aid of the tribes that were still fighting the Taliban. The clear lesson here is that someone will have to intervene to prevent the Islamic terrorists from gaining too much control over the country, or simply to stop the violence before the economy (oil industry) is destroyed. At the moment no one is stepping forward to intervene, mainly because it is an expensive and thankless job. Someone may still intervene to back the government and that is what the government is hoping for.

The main cause of this is disunity is that the various factions cannot agree on much The GNC (originally formed in mid-2012 to create a new constitution for the country to vote on and rule until that was done) became popular with Islamic terrorist militias and some tribal and more secular groups. The GNC has long had the support of most Islamic radical groups, especially Ansar al Sharia in Benghazi. This group was responsible for the 2012 attack that killed the American ambassador. Many of the militias from Misrata (east of Tripoli) support GNC, but many also back rebel general Hifter or are neutral. Because the GNC has been hijacked by the Islamic radicals Hifter sees it as illegitimate. Even many Islamic terrorists don’t trust the new parliament or the GNC. The Hifter coalition of tribal militias and army units is not large enough to take on all the Islamic terrorist militias but continues to battle Islamic terrorist groups in Benghazi. Hifter supports the new parliament and rule of law and is no longer considered a rebel. In turn Hifter is believed to have active support from Egypt and the UAE (United Arab Emirates) while some of the militias are receiving support from Sudan and Qatar.

The two largest cities (Tripoli and Benghazi) are still being fought over, but the real prize is the oil. At the moment the new parliament controls many oil fields and the oil export terminals. Production is growing and is expected to reach a million barrels a day by the end of the month and 1.5 million by the end of the year. If the oil facilities are damaged in the fighting it could take a year or more to
restore production. Oil revenue is what keeps the economy going, which is one reason the oil industry has not suffered much battle damage since the original 2011 revolution. But if the oil income is interrupted because of battle damage most Libyans would be dependent on foreign charity to just survive. All over the country local militias and tribal leaders are deciding which parliament to support. It is believed that most will follow the money, the oil money.

The main problem in Libya is many (over 1,500) armed groups. Most are local and exist mainly for self-defense. Only a minority (under ten percent) of these militias are involved in the current violence in Tripoli and Benghazi. Most of the militias are organized into coalitions, mainly for mutual support and because of some shared beliefs. The largest of these is the Fajr Libya Misrata militias. Then there is Ansar al Sharia, the largest Islamic terrorist group in Benghazi. This group was responsible for the 2012 attack that killed the American ambassador and has most of its strength in the east (around Benghazi). The al Zintan Revolutionaries Military Council is based in the mountains southwest of Tripoli in and around the Berber town of Zintan.

Fajr Libya also asked the Islamic terrorist dominated GNC to reform and meet in Tripoli to run the country. The revived GNC has declared itself the legitimate parliament, insisting that the June vote was invalid. Only 19 percent of eligible voters and 27 percent of registered voters showed up for the June 25th parliamentary elections (the first since Kaddafi was overthrown in 2011). Voters were discouraged by all the violence, factionalism and poor performance of those elected the first time around for the GNC. But the June vote was accepted by most Libyans and the GNC was officially replaced by a new parliament. This was largely because at the end of 2013 the deadlocked GNC extended its power for another year. This was seen by many Libyans as an illegal act. The GNC pointed out that separatist activity in the east prevented any national vote and that had to be dealt with before a constitution could be completed and approved. This was an impossible situation for the GNC and the Islamic radicals were hoping to take advantage of it.

Despite all the chaos in Tripoli and Benghazi the government has managed to get oil exports going again. By mid-September Oil production has increased to over 900,000 barrels a day which is about 60 percent of normal output. This was a high for 2014 and has since been cut over 20 percent as various local groups shut down production in as effort to get a larger share of oil money. In June production was closer to 100,000 barrels a day but government negotiators have had a lot of success since then getting various militias to stop blockading production and shipping facilities. Unfortunately these deals often collapse later and new pressure groups decide to try and blockade something and succeed at it. Getting the oil production back to normal is essential because Libya imports nearly all its food and much else besides. Oil income pays for 95 percent of the government budget and is 65 percent of GDP. Oil is what pays for it and without oil money most Libyans would literally starve. This possibility is getting more attention from militia leaders, who are in turn hearing from their own followers about it. The militias also feed, indirectly, off the oil income because most militias maintain their armed strength by stealing and extorting cash and goods from locals to pay their people and supply them with essentials. Without that most militias would melt away to a few hardcore members and become irrelevant. Another problem with oil is the declining price (now about $96 a barrel). Lower world demand and rapidly growing supplies of North American oil and gas obtained with the new fracking technology is driving down (over 14 percent this year) the price of oil.

All the fighting in the last three months has left over 1,500 dead, many of them civilians caught in the crossfire. This is not as violent as Syria or Iraq, but more like what is going on in Nigeria and Somalia, which also suffer from Islamic terrorist violence (Boko Haram and al Shabaab respectively). Most large militia have a lot of Kaddafi era mortars, artillery and rocket launchers and like to use this stuff to fire in the general direction of whoever they are fighting with. This poorly aimed fire often lands...
on nearby residential areas forcing civilians to flee. The fighting is not conventional, as in “front lines”, clearly identified (by uniforms and symbols) fighters (especially with the militias) and a sense of an overall plan. The Islamic terrorist militias doing the fighting have largely (as in not always) been cut off from their government benefits (like regular pay). In most of the countries the local militias are what passes for police and their government pay is what keeps most of the militiamen quiet. The inability of the Islamic terrorist militias to run a government (in Libya and elsewhere) limits their popularity. But there are enough young men with guns who believe, at least for the moment, in Islamic radicalism to keep the Islamic terrorist militias a threat to the country. In Tripoli and Benghazi the Islamic terrorist militias still favor ambushes, assassinations and kidnappings as opposed to attacks on organized forces (the military or some of the better run militias).

Since August some 5,000 members of parliament, their families, bodyguards and various other staff have arrived in Tobruk and set up show in a seaside resort complex. Currently only about 60 percent of the 200 members of parliament are in attendance. Some have refused to attend, others were called back to their constituencies temporarily or permanently/ If the Tobruk parliament demonstrates continued control over the oil money and imports, more elected members of parliament will show up for work. One of the anti-Islamic terrorists warlords, general Hiftar, has set up bases in Tobruk, including an air base. This contains some of the warplanes and helicopters Hiftar controls. The Tobruk parliament is calling on foreign nations for help in defeating the rebel militias in Tripoli and Benghazi. At the same time many Libyans blame NATO for all their problems. The logic of this is that NATO air support for the rebels in 2011 allowed the many militias to defeat Kaddafi and then create chaos. More thoughtful Libyans, although a minority, understand that the lack of willingness by most Libyans to negotiate and compromise is the real cause of the current mess and a major part of any solution is recognizing what is really going on rather than blaming the mess on foreigners.

Egypt has offered to train Libyan Army soldiers, something which several NATO nations have already been doing. Egypt has the advantage of using Arab trainers who speak fluent Arabic and have a cultural affinity for what Libyans are going through. Egypt also offered to share intelligence it has on Libyan militias, especially those in the east (Benghazi) because some of these groups threaten Egypt and Egypt would like to see all the Islamic terrorist groups gone from Benghazi and Libya in general. That would help reduce the weapons smuggling activity which mainly goes through Egypt.

This cultural affinity is important. That was seen as Britain recently revealed that in August they had to deal with a mutiny among 300 Libyan soldiers being trained at a British base. The Libyans were selected to receive combat and leadership training so they could better train and command Libyan soldiers back in Libya. The mutiny occurred when British officers in charge of the training put three of the trainees under guard after police picked them up for being off base without permission. Then twenty other trainees went and threatened the British soldier guarding the three Libyan trainees. The British guard let the three go free rather than risk violence. Senior officers were uncertain about how to handle this insubordination given the nature of Arab military trainees. What happened with these Libyans was not uncommon when Westerners are assigned to train Arabs to be military leaders. What these trainers run into is a collection of problems that have long made it difficult for Arab, and many other poor (and often Moslem) nations to establish democratic governments or prosperous economies. A lot of the problem has to do with culture, especially culture influenced by Islam. There are a number of reasons for this and the most important problems are tribalism, different attitudes towards learning, leading and training.

Since 2011 over 30 percent of the population has fled Libya, most of them to neighboring Tunisia. That was easy to do because about 85 percent of Libya’s six million people live along the coast. Some
five percent are still nomadic. Other minorities comprise about six percent of the population. Nearly 100 percent of the population speaks at least some Arabic and 97 percent are Sunni Moslems. The Berber are Sunni but were never big on Islamic radicalism. Kaddafi saw the Berbers as a threat because they were not Arab but had, for over a thousand years, resisted Arab domination. The Berber nationalists have also been holding demonstrations outside oil facilities in the West, interfering with oil production.

Joining the civilian refugees are (so far) over 150,000 foreign workers, who do a lot of the technical work (especially medical or oil related) and some of the harshest manual jobs. This has caused the government to become even more unresponsive.

October 4, 2014: A British school teacher who was kidnapped in May was released after payment of a ransom. This is discouraged because it encourages more kidnappings of foreigners. In the last few months most foreigners from Western countries that pay ransoms have fled the country.

October 5, 2014: In the eastern city of Derna an Islamic terrorist group (Shura Council of Islamic Youth) declared their support for ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant). This is good news for the government because any ISIL affiliated Islamic terrorist militias will now suffer more international pressure as well as the need to attack other Islamic terrorist groups that have not declared for ISIL.

October 9, 2014: In neighboring Niger French troops, in cooperation with local forces, intercepted and destroyed an AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) convoy carrying weapons and ammunition from Libya to Mali. Some of the Islamic terrorists involved were captured.

October 10, 2014: In an effort to halt the attacks on them, the Ansar al Sharia Islamic terrorist militia (the largest in the city) in Benghazi declared that they had no intention of spreading their rule beyond Benghazi. This pledge did not work and the army, tribal and Hiftar forces kept attacking.

October 12, 2014: Egypt warned its citizens, especially the many truck drivers operating in Libya, to not venture beyond Tobruk because of the risk of being kidnapped or robbed by Islamic terrorist rebels.

October 19, 2014: The internationally recognized government in Tobruk has openly allied itself with general Hiftar, who has always declared his support for a government.

October 22, 2014: The Tobruk government announced that its forces had driven Islamic terrorist groups out of Benghazi. While that is true, most of these groups retreated in an orderly fashion taking many weapons and supplies with them. Now the government forces (mainly the army and the Hiftar coalition) must pursue the retreating Islamic terrorists to towns and smaller cities where some of these groups already have some presence. At the same time the government said it was gathering forces to retake Tripoli. That probably means a coalition of pro-government militias in the west. The army and Hiftar forces are all tied up chasing down Islamic terrorists in the east.

While the fighting in Benghazi got most of the headlines over the last month hostilities continued on the outskirts of Tripoli and these militias are apparently the ones the government expects to retake Tripoli. The fighting in Benghazi had died down by the 21st after three weeks of increasingly intense fighting that caused over a thousand casualties (and more than several hundred dead). The government used its artillery and air power to good effect and that made it difficult for the Islamic terrorist militias to mass men to take ground. That’s why several major efforts to take the Benghazi airport failed. This use of firepower drove out the Islamic terrorists but also caused extensive damage to buildings and led to over 100,000 civilians fleeing Benghazi and Tripoli (where there was less artillery and air attacks). In Benghazi it got so bad that senior leaders of the Islamic terrorist militias
had to show up at the front lines to rally their gunmen, many of whom were quietly slipping away and going home. This led to several of these senior leaders getting killed.

While Libya has come apart as a nation in the political sense, the Tripoli and Tobruk governments have agreed to not interfere with oil operations. The understanding here is that the oil income, which the Tobruk government largely controls, buys essentials (like food) that will continue to be distributed to all Libyans. So far that seems to be working. This is what always mattered most because the oil money pays for everything. The cash from oil sales is going into the Central Bank, which tends to answer to the Tobruk parliament because that is the one with international recognition and that provides access to the international banking system. The various factions are pressuring the Central Bank and courts to favor them but it is the international community that controls the ability of Libya to buy essential (most of the food and everything else) needed to keep Libyans alive recognizes the Tobruk officials. That internationally recognized government set up shop in the small port city of Tobruk (1,600 kilometers east of Tripoli) after encountering hostility from militias loyal to the pre-June government. Many other government offices moved as well and are finding space where they can. The rebel governments in Tripoli and the Tobruk are fighting over who controls more than $100 billion held by the Central Bank. A lot of that cash is overseas and since Tobruk has international and UN support the Tripoli rebels are having a hard time maintaining control of any oil income. If the Tripoli government tries to sell oil on the black market they will have most of the world going after them with bank account shutdowns and seizure of the tankers they use (either in port or on the high seas). In the end, it’s the oil money that will bring peace, or abject poverty for all. The government is running out of cash and credit. Another year or two of this and life gets very miserable for Libyans.

Egypt is hosting a three day conference of Libyan tribal leaders in Cairo. The meeting includes tribal chiefs from all over Libya. While often at odds with each other, all the tribes suffer if the country descends into anarchy and the oil money stops. If that happens the tribes starve and lose much else besides. It’s not just religious extremism that divides Libyans, it’s also tribalism. The tribe angle is even more important than religion but is often mixed up with religious attitudes and the charisma of a local leader to keep the divisions fresh and violent. Most of the tribes oppose the Islamic terrorist groups but getting them to cooperate in opposing the Islamic terrorists has been difficult. It was a major chore just getting so many tribal chiefs to come to Cairo and discuss the matter. Meanwhile Egypt keeps denying that its warplanes were responsible for another several air strikes in Benghazi. So far there have not been any compelling cell phone photos or videos to back up the eyewitness reports. Egypt is very eager to have peace in Libya, if only to avoid having an Islamic terrorist sanctuary as a neighbor. Most of the armed men guarding the border are on the Egyptian side. The Libyans have thousands of armed men assigned to border security but these personnel are poorly trained, led and equipped. Smugglers have more to worry about once they get on the other side of the Libyan border.

The Mali peacekeeping force, composed of 11,000 French and (mainly) African troops has been suffering more casualties in the last month as Islamic terrorists from Mali settle into bases in southern Libya and are now regularly moving south to carry out operations in northern Mali. All this is possible because of the Libyan civil war. That is mainly up north along the coast and no one bothers with Islamic terrorists who only kill across the border in Mali. There is a similar problem in Afghanistan with Islamic terrorists operations from several sanctuary areas in neighboring Pakistan and Iran.

October 30, 2014: Libya has asked for foreign assistance in destroying its remaining stockpile of raw materials for making nerve gas. Although facilities for the destruction of this stuff have been built in
Libya and Libyans trained to do it, the chaos in Libya since the Kaddafi government was overthrown in 2011 have prevented the work from being done. So the Libyans are asking for the 850 tons of chemicals to be shipped out and destroyed overseas as was recently done with a similar Syrian stockpile.

In 2012 foreign nations agreed to provide experts and equipment to help destroy Libyan chemical weapons. Moamar Kaddafi stockpiled nerve, mustard, and several other types of poisons over the decades. Some of these chemicals are so old that they are dangerous to handle.

In 2004 Libya handed over to international disarmament officials details about Libya's chemical weapons program. Libya described one chemical weapons production facility and stockpiles containing thousands of tons of raw materials needed to manufacture sarin nerve gas as well as two large stockpiles containing 22 tons of mustard gas.

At the same time Libya announced it would begin destroying more than 3,300 unfilled chemical bombs, with the help of foreign experts. This process was still incomplete when the Kaddafi dictatorship was overthrown in 2011.

November 14, 2014: In early November Britain sent 300 Libyan officer trainees home before their 24 week training was completed. Five of the Libyans did not leave as they are being held on rape charges. Three of these Libyans are charged with raping women and two of raping a man. The Libyans had arrived in June and within a month locals were complaining of Libyans coming into the nearby village and behaving badly. This was not supposed to happen as the Libyans were selected to receive combat and leadership training so they could better train and command troops back in Libya.

British authorities were surprised by the bad behavior and responded by ordering the Libyans were restricted to the 80 hectare (200 acre) base where they lived and trained. In August this led to a mutiny among the Libyans.

The August mutiny occurred when British officers in charge of the training put three of the trainees under guard after police picked them up for being off base without permission. Then twenty other trainees went and threatened the British soldier guarding the three Libyan trainees. The British guard let the three go free rather than risk violence. Senior officers were uncertain about how to handle this insubordination given the nature of Arab military trainees. The situation went downhill from there. The Libyans were not only undisciplined but also unreliable. They would agree to certain conditions (as in how they behaved towards civilians on and off the base, especially women) and then ignore those agreements. When confronted they would plead ignorance of British customs and refuse to accept responsibility. The Libyans also constantly fought among themselves. Although depicting themselves as devout Moslems many of them would go to the village, get drunk and behave badly. Some blamed the British for making alcohol too easy to obtain. The British tried to cope with all this by stationing hundreds of armed soldiers in the village (population 3,500) and on the base to prevent the Libyans from getting out of hand. This did not work either. Some of the Libyans tried to apply for political asylum. This was denied after the rape incidents in late October and the decision was made to send all the Libyans home.

What happened with these Libyans was not uncommon when Westerners are assigned to train Arabs to be military leaders. What these trainers run into is a collection of problems that have long made it difficult for Arab, and many other poor (and often Moslem) nations to establish democratic governments or prosperous economies. A lot of the problem has to do with culture, especially culture influenced by Islam. There are a number of reasons for this and the most important problems are;
Most Arab countries are a patchwork of different tribes and ethnic or religious groups, and Arab leaders survive by playing one group off against another. Loyalty is to one's group, not the nation. Most countries are dominated by a single group that is usually a minority (Bedouins in Jordan, Alawites in Syria, Sunnis in Iraq, Nejdis in Saudi Arabia). All of which means that officers are selected not by merit but by loyalty and tribal affiliation.

Islamic schools favor rote memorization, especially of scripture. Most Islamic scholars are hostile to the concept of interpreting the Koran (considered the word of God as given to His prophet Mohammed). This has resulted in looking down on Western troops that will look something up that they don't know. Arabs prefer to fake it, and pretend it's all in their head. Despite that improvisation and innovation is generally discouraged. Arab armies go by the book, Western armies rewrite the book as needed and thus usually win.

There is no real use of NCOs (sergeants or petty officers). Officers and enlisted troops are treated like two different social castes and there is no effort to bridge the gap using career NCOs. Enlisted personnel are treated harshly. Training accidents that would end the careers of US officers are commonplace in Arab armies, and nobody cares. The troops do not appreciate this and that dislike often manifests itself in unpleasant ways.

Officers tend to be despised by their troops, and this does not bother the officers much it all. Many Arab officers simply cannot understand how treating the troops decently will make them better soldiers. Westerners have a hard time convincing Arab leaders on this point and those that do understand and implement these ideas risk ridicule for not being authentic (as an Arab).

Paranoia prevents adequate training. Arab tyrants insist that their military units have little contact with each other, thus insuring that no general can became powerful enough to overthrow the government. Units are purposely kept from working together or training on a large scale. Arab generals don’t have as broad a knowledge of their armed forces as do their Western counterparts. Even at the most senior levels promotions are based more on political reliability than combat proficiency. Arab leaders prefer to be feared, rather than respected, by their soldiers. This approach leads to poorly trained armies and low morale. A few rousing speeches about "Moslem brotherhood" before a war starts does little to repair the damage.

Arab officers often do not trust each other. While an American infantry officer can be reasonably confident that the artillery officers will conduct their bombardment on time and on target, Arab infantry officers seriously doubt that their artillery will do its job on time or on target. This is a fatal attitude in combat.

Arab military leaders consider it acceptable to lie to subordinates and allies in order to further their personal agenda. This had catastrophic consequences during all of the Arab-Israeli wars and continues to make peace difficult between Israelis and Palestinians. When called out on this behavior, Arabs will assert that they were "misunderstood."

While Western officers and NCOs are only too happy to impart their wisdom and skill to others (teaching is the ultimate expression of prestige), Arab officers try to keep any technical information and manuals secret. To Arabs, the value and prestige of an individual is based not on what he can teach, but on what he knows that no one else knows.

While Western officers thrive on competition among themselves, Arab officers avoid this as the loser would be humiliated. Better for everyone to fail together than for competition to be allowed, even if it eventually benefits everyone.
Westerners are taught leadership and technology; Arab officers are taught only technology. Leadership is given little attention as officers are assumed to know this by virtue of their social status as officers.

Initiative is considered a dangerous trait. So subordinates prefer to fail rather than make an independent decision. Battles are micromanaged by senior generals, who prefer to suffer defeat rather than lose control of their subordinates. Even worse, an Arab officer will not tell a U.S. ally why he cannot make the decision (or even that he cannot make it), leaving Western officers angry and frustrated because the Arabs won't make a decision. The Arab officers simply will not admit that they do not have that authority.

Lack of initiative makes it difficult for Arab armies to maintain modern weapons. Complex modern weapons require on the spot maintenance, and that means delegating authority, information, and tools. Arab armies avoid doing this and prefer to use easier to control central repair shops. This makes the timely maintenance of weapons difficult.

Security is maniacal. Everything even vaguely military is top secret. While Western promotion lists are routinely published, this rarely happens in Arab armies. Officers are suddenly transferred without warning to keep them from forging alliances or networks. Any team spirit among officers is discouraged.

All these traits were reinforced, from the 1950s to the 1990s, by Soviet advisors. To the Russians, anything military was secret, enlisted personnel were scum, they had no use for NCOs and everyone was paranoid about everyone else. These were not "communist" traits, but Russian customs that had existed for centuries and were adopted by the communists to make their dictatorship more secure from rebellion. Arab dictators avidly accepted this kind of advice, but are still concerned about how rapidly the communist dictatorships all came tumbling down between 1989 and 1991.

Arab states can produce fearsome looking armies, at least on paper. But these troops cannot survive an encounter with well trained and led soldiers. Even fanatical Islamic terrorists are often too much to handle. This is still happening throughout the Arab world as can be seen recently in Libya and Iraq.

October 24, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) pro-government forces seized the largest Islamic terrorist base in the city.

October 25, 2014: Libya has asked for foreign assistance in destroying its remaining stockpile of raw materials for making nerve gas. Although facilities for the destruction of this stuff have been built in Libya and Libyans trained to do it, the chaos in Libya since the Kaddafi government was overthrown in 2011 have prevented the work from being done. So the Libyans are asking for the 850 tons of chemicals to be shipped out and destroyed overseas as was recently done with a similar Syrian stockpile.

October 31, 2014: Pro-government forces claim to control 80 percent of Benghazi but the remaining Islamic terrorists are fighting to the death and will require another few weeks of effort to clear out. Meanwhile many of the Islamic terrorists who quickly got out of the city when the offensive began over a month ago have set up operations outside the city and throughout eastern Libya. These groups will have to be taken down one at a time.

The Hiftar forces also say they have proof that Qatar was sending weapons and military equipment to Islamic terrorist groups in Libya. The proof comes in the form of an aircraft from Qatar that landed in an airport controlled by Hiftar forces and was seized and searched.
November 1, 2014: The pro-government Labraq airport east of Benghazi has been temporarily closed until security forces can shut down the groups who have been firing rockets into the airport area.

November 3, 2014: In Benghazi an RPG fired from a high rise building (apparently by an Islamic terrorist) hit a ship in the government controlled port area and caused a fire on board.

November 5, 2014: Britain has begun flying home nearly 300 Libyan officer trainees before their 24 week training was completed. Five of the Libyans did not leave as they are being held on rape charges. Three of these Libyans are charged with raping women and two of raping a man. The Libyans had arrived in June and within a month locals were complaining of Libyans coming into nearby communities and behaving badly. This was not supposed to happen as the Libyans were selected to receive combat and leadership training so they could better train and command troops back in Libya. British authorities were surprised by the bad behavior and responded by ordering the Libyans restricted to the 80 hectare (200 acre) base where they lived and trained. In August this led to a mutiny among some of the Libyans after British officers in charge of the training put three of the trainees under guard after police picked them up for being off base without permission. Then twenty other trainees went and threatened the British soldier guarding the three Libyan trainees. The British guard let the three go free rather than risk violence. Senior officers were uncertain about how to handle this insubordination. The situation went downhill from there. The Libyans were not only undisciplined but also unreliable. They would agree to certain conditions (as in how they behaved towards civilians on and off the base, especially women) and then ignore those agreements. When confronted they would plead ignorance of British customs and refused to accept responsibility. The Libyans also constantly fought among themselves. Although depicting themselves as devout Moslems many of them would go to the village, get drunk and commit crimes. Some blamed the British for making alcohol too easy to obtain. The British tried to cope with all this by stationing hundreds of armed soldiers in nearby communities and on the base to prevent the Libyans from getting out of hand. This did not work either. At least twenty of the Libyans tried to apply for political asylum. This was denied after the rape incidents in late October and the decision was made to send all the Libyans home. The five in jail will face trial early next year. Not all the trainees misbehaved and some of them were hastily given a graduation ceremony even though the training was a few weeks short of completion. This group of Libyans, selected from many pro-government factions, gave Britons an up-close exposure to the kind of thinking and behavior that is tearing Libya apart.

November 6, 2014: In Tripoli the constitutional court declared invalid the June 25th vote that elected the parliament that currently operates in Tobruk. The Tobruk government rejected this and accused the judges of succumbing to pressure from Islamic terrorist militias that control Tripoli and often use intimidation to get their way.

November 9, 2014: In the east (Shahat) a bomb went off in the town near where the UN was hosting talks with officials from the Tobruk government. There were no injuries. In the west (Tripoli) a group of gunmen attacked a bank and stole $1.3 million.

November 12, 2014: In Tobruk two car bombs went off near the Oil Institute, killing three and wounding more than twenty. Another large explosion occurred at an air base near the eastern city of Bayda (controlled by the Tobruk government). This has disrupted commercial flights that now operate from that air base.
November 13, 2014: In Tripoli two car bombs went off near Egyptian and United Arab Emirates embassies. There were apparently no casualties. The embassies were boarded up and closed earlier this year.

November 14, 2014: Hiftar forces in Benghazi handed over nine Turks they had arrested in Benghazi two weeks ago. The Hiftar forces determined that the Turks were innocent of any crimes and were just in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Tobruk government was in the process of turning the Turks over to the Turkish government via the UN.

November 15, 2014: Despite the continued fighting in the east and attacks on some oil fields, oil shipments have continued. There have been some interruptions recently, but the national oil company has managed to cope and is still on schedule to get oil shipments up to a million barrels a day by the end of the year. That goal is threatened by undisciplined factions technically allied with the Tripoli government who continue to fight over control of oil facilities even though this is counterproductive (these factions have no way to selling any oil they seize). Oil shipments peaked at 800,000 barrels a day in September but have since dropped to 500,000 a day. Pre-2011 shipments were three time that.

The battle for Benghazi continues. For over a month there has been heavy fighting as some Islamic terror groups refuse to leave the city and fight to the death. The pro-government forces of general Hiftar are using artillery, air power and armored vehicles to methodically kill the remaining Islamic terrorists in the city. A month of this sort of thing has created several thousand casualties, including over 400 dead. One the major side effects of all this fighting was the disruption of the normal activities in the city. As the largest city in Eastern Libya, Benghazi contained essential administrative and logistical (warehouses with key items like medical supplies) operations. The disruption caused by the fighting created shortages of medical supplies and interrupted administrative support for many oil facilities in the east. Everyone concerned had to scramble to make alternate arrangements.

In the southeast the army has another problem with the growing number of Islamic terrorist camps being set up in southwest Libya (where the borders of Libya, Algeria and Niger meet). Algeria and Niger are hard pressed to prevent all illegal crossings. As many Islamic terrorists are caught doing so, many more make it through. Malian Islamic terrorists from bases in southern Libya are now regularly moving south to carry out operations in northern Mali. All this is possible because of the Libyan civil war. That conflict is mainly up north along the coast and no one bothers with Islamic terrorists who only kill across the border in Mali. There is a similar problem in Afghanistan with Islamic terrorists operations from several sanctuary areas in neighboring Pakistan and Iran. French and American intelligence know a lot about all the illegal activity in southern Libya. UAVs and satellites reveal details of Islamic terrorist camps and convoys sneaking across the southern borders. Local spies and informants are used to obtain more detailed information and from that it is known that most of the armed men in the south are more intent on making money (usually smuggling guns, drugs or people) than Islamic terrorism. The big problem in southern Libya is that there is no law, aside from what little local tribal elders will hand out concerning tribal matters. The Libyan government has some security forces down there, but they are largely confined to the few towns in the desert area. The Tobruk government says it will deal with the lawless south as soon as it deals with a rival Islamic terrorist backed government in Tripoli.

Libya continues to come apart as a nation. The Tripoli and Tobruk governments have agreed to not interfere with oil operations, but the Tripoli government does not control all the Islamic terrorist groups that are technically under its command. Despite that there is a general understanding that the oil income, which the Tobruk government largely controls, buys essentials (like food) that will continue to be distributed to all Libyans. So far that seems to be working. This is what always
mattered most because the oil money pays for everything. The cash from oil sales is going into the Central Bank, which tends to answer to the Tobruk parliament because that is the one with international recognition and that provides access to the international banking system. The various factions are pressuring the Central Bank and courts to favor them but it is the international community that controls the ability of Libya to buy essential (most of the food and everything else) needed to keep Libyans alive recognizes the Tobruk officials. That internationally recognized government set up shop in the small port city of Tobruk (1,600 kilometers east of Tripoli) after encountering hostility from militias loyal to the pre-June government. Many other government offices moved as well and are finding space where they can. The rebel governments in Tripoli and the Tobruk are fighting over who controls more than $100 billion held by the Central Bank. A lot of that cash is overseas and since Tobruk has international and UN support the Tripoli rebels are having a hard time maintaining control of any oil income. If the Tripoli government tries to sell oil on the black market they will have most of the world going after them with bank account shutdowns and seizure of the tankers they use (either in port or on the high seas). In the end, it’s the oil money that will bring peace, or abject poverty for all. The government is running out of cash and credit. Another year or two of this and life gets very miserable for Libyans. The UN speaks of Libya has sliding into a state of anarchy. No one is willing to intervene militarily and the UN has constant problems with gangsters and Islamic terrorists attacking air efforts. This could end very badly.

The Tripoli government has support from Turkey, Sudan and Qatar while the Tobruk government has most of the world recognizing it, along with most of the Islamic world. This is especially true with neighboring Egypt and most of the Arab oil states. Egypt has proclaimed that it will not intervene militarily. While that is the official position Egypt is apparently providing substantial, and secret, support to the Hiftar forces. This comes in the form of air support, weapons and other military supplies and even some Egyptian special operations troops. A major concern of the Egyptians is the movement of weapons and Islamic terrorists into Egypt and there are a lot more Egyptian troops and police on the Libyan border in the past few months. What the Egyptians need is pro-Egypt forces controlling the Libyan side of the frontier. Thus the support for the Hiftar coalition, which arose in Eastern Libya as a coalition of Libyan Army units, tribal militias and anti-Islamic terrorist groups. Hiftar is now officially part of the Tobruk government armed forces.

Most Libyans are fed up with the continuing violence. The 2011 rebellion against Kadaffi left over 30,000 dead but the infighting since then has killed nearly as many. Most major factions agree on peace but Islamic terrorist groups in Tripoli and Benghazi, aided by tribal factions that want more power and money, continue to fight.

November 20, 2014: The UN negotiated a 12 hour ceasefire in Benghazi. This is mainly to allow remaining civilians to flee and for bodies to be collected for burial. The Islamic terrorist groups agree to this because they feel a religious obligation to give their dead comrades a proper Islamic funeral. Such ceasefires have been rare in Benghazi.

The UN added the major Islamic terrorist group in Libya (Ansar al Sharia) to its blacklist of international terrorists. All major nations (including Turkey, which supports some Islamic terrorist groups) agreed over the next week or so to enforce the UN ban. Being on the blacklist makes it more difficult for a group to operate internationally.

November 23, 2014: Malta joins the growing list of countries that have pulled their diplomats from Tripoli because of the growing violence.

December 1, 2014: The recent OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) meeting in Austria reaffirmed OPEC recognition of the Tobruk government. OPEC data also showed that Libyan
oil income fell from $32 billion in 2013 to about $12 billion this year. This decline is a combination of less oil shipped (because of the growing violence) and the plunging (from $110 to under $70 per barrel) price of oil. Libya is currently producing 700,000 barrels a day, down from the pre-war 1.5 million. The official OPEC recognition of the Tobruk government makes it much more difficult for the Tripoli government to sell any oil it manages to get to a port.

There is still fighting in Tripoli, despite the Misrata militia taking control of the city after months of fighting. It was this control that made possible the establishment of a rival government in Tripoli. Many factions in the Misrata coalition believe this rival government is a mistake but so far the Misrata groups is sticking with it. Some of these factions are resorting to violence.

Elsewhere in the east (the coastal city of Derna) a local Islamic terrorist group (SCIY or Shura Council of Islamic Youth) that declared support for ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) in October is apparently now the official Libyan ISIL franchise. SCIY is not the only armed group in Derna (a city of about 150,000) but is trying to assert its authority and expand the territory it controls. This is good news for the Tobruk government because any ISIL affiliated Islamic terrorist militias will now suffer more international pressure as well as the need to attack other Islamic terrorist groups that have not declared for ISIL. SCIY has become a magnet for the most fanatic Islamic terrorist minded men in Libya and is gaining strength daily. There are now nearly a thousand SCIY men in the city and eventually there will have to be a deadly confrontation with them. Meanwhile the most dangerous aspect of SCIY is that ISIL level fanaticism means lots of suicide bombers are available and until SCIY is crushed there were be more of these types of attacks.

December 3, 2014: Libya continues to be divided. There are currently two governments and dozens of major tribal and Islamic terrorists factions that are largely autonomous. The Tripoli and Tobruk governments are far apart and represent different groups. The Tobruk government has international recognition and won the last (this year) national elections. The Tobruk government is backed by many tribal organizations (and their militias) and most of the more secular Libyans (who tend to live in cities or along the coast).

The Tripoli government is backed by groups with more of a religious motivation as well as tribes and cities in the west that feel they deserve to run the country (as they long did under Kaddafi). The Tripoli government does not control all the Islamic terrorist groups that are technically under its command.

The only thing the two governments will sometimes agree on is the use of oil income, which the Tobruk government largely controls, buys essentials (like food) that will continue to be distributed to all Libyans. This is what always mattered most because the oil money pays for everything. The cash from oil sales is going into the Central Bank, which tends to answer to the Tobruk parliament because that is the one with international recognition and that provides access to the international banking system. The various factions are pressuring the Central Bank and courts to favor them but it is the international community that controls the ability of Libya to buy essentials (most of the food and everything else) needed to keep Libyans alive and the international community recognizes the Tobruk officials. Because of the violent response by Tripoli based Islamic terrorist militias, the legitimate government set up shop in the small port city of Tobruk (1,600 kilometers east of Tripoli) after encountering hostility from militias loyal to the pre-June government that refused to recognize the results of the June elections. Many other government offices moved to Tobruk but many stayed or could not get out in time.

The rival governments in Tripoli and the Tobruk are also fighting over who controls more than $100 billion held by the Central Bank. A lot of that cash is overseas and since Tobruk has international and
UN support the Tripoli rebels are having a hard time maintaining control of any oil income. If the Tripoli government tries to sell oil on the black market they will have most of the world going after them with bank account shutdowns and seizure of the tankers they use (either in port or on the high seas). In the end, it’s the oil money that will bring peace, or abject poverty for all. The government is running out of cash and credit. Another year or two of this and life gets very miserable for Libyans. The UN speaks of Libya of sliding into a state of anarchy. No one is willing to intervene militarily and the UN has constant problems with gangsters and Islamic terrorists attacking aid efforts. This could end very badly.

The Tripoli government has support from Turkey, Sudan and Qatar while the Tobruk government has most of the world recognizing it, along with most of the Islamic world. This is especially true with neighboring Egypt and most of the Arab oil states. Egypt has proclaimed that it will not intervene militarily. While that is the official position Egypt is apparently providing substantial, and secret, support to the pro-Tobruk Hiftar coalition. This comes in the form of air support, weapons and other military supplies and even some Egyptian special operations troops. A major concern of the Egyptians is the movement of weapons and Islamic terrorists into Egypt and there are a lot more Egyptian troops and police on the Libyan border since the June elections. What the Egyptians need is pro-Egypt forces controlling the Libyan side of the frontier. Thus the support for the Hiftar forces, which arose in Eastern Libya as a coalition of Libyan Army units, tribal militias and anti-Islamic terrorist groups. General Hiftar and his coalition of tribal militias and army units is now officially part of the Tobruk government armed forces but still operates independently because the Tobruk is short of military experts and specialists capable of managing a military campaign. So is the Tripoli government and resulting lack of coordination among their armed components is another advantage the Tobruk government has.

Warplanes loyal to the Tobruk government bombed targets west of Tripoli that were believed involved with importing weapons and ammunition for forces loyal to the Tripoli government. At least four were killed and nearly twenty wounded. The Tobruk government has taken responsibility for all the recent air attacks on Tripoli. This was done in part to deal with rumors that foreign aircraft (from Egypt) were involved. Some of the air attacks have been on the Tripoli airport, which the Tobruk government believes is being used for military purposes.

Fighting continues in Benghazi with Hiftar forces continuing to slowly push Islamic terrorist groups out of the city. Nearly 500 have died and more than 2,000 wounded in eight weeks of fighting. Tobruk government forces continue to advance to the west along the coast and expand their control in the interior. Hiftar is a military professional and realizes that by keeping casualties low among his own forces he maintains an edge in morale and overall effectiveness. The opposition continues to suffer heavy desertions and lack of coordination, which the Hiftar forces take advantage of.

The international recognition and anti-Islamic terrorist attitude appeals to most Libyans. Unfortunately many Libyans, especially the tribes in the south (where the oil is) want autonomy as well as more of the oil money. At the moment the various tribes rule the south and deals have to be made with each of them to keep oil operations going. Along the coast the Islamic terrorist groups have often made deals with local militias that are more interested in local autonomy than religious fanaticism. The problem with Libya is that most residents consider themselves Libyans but too many of them are not willing to cooperate to make the country work. More and more Libyans are realizing and accepting the fact that compromise and cooperation is necessary for all to prosper (or even survive) but widespread acceptance of this reality is happening very slowly. Most Libyans are fed up with the continuing violence. The 2011 rebellion against Kadaffi left over 30,000 dead but the infighting since then has killed nearly as many. Most major factions agree on peace but Islamic
terrorist groups in Tripoli and Benghazi, aided by tribal factions that want more power and money, continue to fight.

December 3, 2014: Algeria is taking in seriously wounded Libyans. Since November 91 seriously wounded Libyans have been allowed to cross the border and receive medical treatment. Algeria has allowed thousands of Libyan refugees in as well. Taking the wounded is done in cooperation with Libyan medical organizations. Algeria has sealed itself off from the current civil war in Libya.

December 11, 2014: The EU (European Union) banned the seven Libyan airlines from operating in any of the 28 EU nations. This is in recognition of the chaos in Libya and the ability of Islamic terrorist groups to operate wherever they want in the country. Egypt imposed curbs on men age 18-40 travelling to Libya or Turkey. This is an effort to reduce the number of Egyptians from joining ISIL and other Islamic terrorist groups.

December 14, 2014: In the east (Benghazi) fighting against Islamic terrorists in that city led to the death of a well-known AQIM (Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb) leader and several of his followers. The presence of this AQIM leader in Benghazi apparently has to do with the recent split in AQIM as some factions broke away to support the more radical ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant).

December 19, 2014: In Tripoli gunmen broke into the unoccupied residence compound of the Swiss ambassador but fled when police arrived in response to the alarm system. The Swiss closed their embassy in August. Police were aware of the gang that carried out the break in and soon caught up with them killing one of the criminals and wounding two others. The car and electronic devices stolen were recovered.

December 21, 2014: In Tripoli eight gunmen robbed a bank of $5 million in Libyan currency.

December 22, 2014: Egypt closed the Salloum border crossing, which is the main entry point for truck traffic from Egypt. The closing was at the request of the Tobruk government, which controls the Libyan side of the border at Salloum. The crossing was opened the next day and both countries have worked to increase scrutiny of those entering Libya. Many of those crossing who are not Libyan or Egyptian tend to be members (or those seeking to be) of Islamic terrorists groups. By denying the Islamic terrorists access to the major border crossing they must resort to the smuggling routes, which are more expensive, dangerous and time consuming.

December 22, 2014: Near the coastal city of Sirte (500 kilometers east of Tripoli and midway between Tripoli and Benghazi) militias from Tripoli have been trying to take two oil export ports (Ras Lanuf and Es Sider) since December 13th. Within a few days the invaders were a few kilometers from the oil ports but were stopped by defenders supported by artillery and air strikes. The attackers have refrained from using artillery or rocket launchers to damage these ports. Troops and militias loyal to the Tobruk government have so far kept the ports safe. The two export ports can ship 300,000 barrels a day but have been closed for a week and will remain shut down until the Tripoli force is defeated. The Tripoli government is backed by Islamic terrorist militias and is not recognized by the UN while the Tobruk government is. The Tripoli group apparently wants to take control of oil resources and thus have something to bargain with. Tripoli represents the minority of Libyans who want a religious dictatorship. The opposition, which won the last election (in June) have the backing of the international community but must win a civil war to really run the country. The oil is essential as is control over Libyan financial assets. Thus the rival governments in Tripoli and the Tobruk are also fighting over who controls more than $100 billion held (but rapidly dwindling) by the Central Bank. A lot of that cash is overseas and since Tobruk has international and UN support the Tripoli rebels are having a hard time gaining control of any oil income. If the Tripoli government tries to sell oil on the black market they will have most of the world going after them with bank account
shutdowns and seizure of the tankers they use (either in port or on the high seas). In the end, it’s the oil money that will bring peace, or abject poverty for all.

The government is running out of cash and credit. In the first eleven months of 2014 the government received only $15 billion (almost all of it from oil sales) versus $45 billion for the same period last year. The major problem here was the sharp drop in the sales price of oil (from $110 a barrel to $55) since 2013. Another year or two of this and life gets very miserable for Libyans. The UN speaks of Libya of sliding into a state of anarchy. No one is willing to intervene militarily. The Tripoli government is controlled by people who will not accept defeat and are willing to destroy the oil facilities to deny the Tobruk government victory. Some Tripoli leaders believe this threat may coerce the Tobruk government and their international supporters to support a compromise that will give the Islamic radicals more power than their numbers justify. That angers most Libyans who do not want to live in a country that, in effect, is forced to pay a portion of their national income to a bunch of terrorists. This could end very badly.

The Tripoli government has support from Turkey, Sudan and Qatar while the Tobruk government has most of the world recognizing it, along with most of the Islamic world. Turkey is under growing international pressure to support the Tobruk government and has so far responded by accusing its foreign critics of conspiring against Turkey. Turkey is also facing pressure from Egypt and most of the Arab oil states. Meanwhile no one is willing to intervene. While Egypt has proclaimed that it will not intervene militarily it is apparently providing substantial, and secret, support to the pro-Tobruk Hiftar coalition. This comes in the form of air support, weapons and other military supplies and even some Egyptian special operations troops. A major concern of the Egyptians is the movement of weapons and Islamic terrorists into Egypt and there are a lot more Egyptian troops and police on the Libyan border since the June elections. What the Egyptians need is pro-Egypt forces controlling the Libyan side of the frontier. Thus the support for the Hiftar forces, which arose in Eastern Libya as a coalition of Libyan Army units, tribal militias and anti-Islamic terrorist groups. General Hiftar and his coalition of tribal militias and army units is now officially part of the Tobruk government armed forces but still operates independently because the Tobruk is short of military experts and specialists capable of managing a military campaign. So is the Tripoli government and resulting lack of coordination among their armed components is another advantage the Tobruk government has.

The United States and the UN are trying to persuade Egypt, the UAE (United Arab Emirates) and Qatar to drop their support for more secular (and non-terrorist) pro-Tobruk factions fighting in Libya. The UN is sponsoring peace talks in Libya but Egypt sees this as futile and counterproductive because the Islamic terrorist factions really have no interest in compromising. Nevertheless Algeria and most Western nations (especially the EU) see a negotiated settlement as the best way to deal with the Libya civil war. The Tobruk government is going along with this, mainly because they cannot afford to annoy the UN. The Tripoli government is less eager to negotiate, in part because some of their factions are hard core Islamic terrorists and not inclined to compromise.

The countries who are most concerned about the chaos in Libya are the African ones to the south (the semi-desert Sahel region). They are threatened by Islamic terrorists groups who have been free to establish bases and training camps in southern Libya. From there Islamic terrorists move men and material in and out of neighboring countries. While Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt have large and effective security forces to deal with this, the African nations to the south (especially Mali, Niger and Chad) are much less well equipped to handle the Islamic terrorists coming in from Libya. In response France and the U.S. have sent several thousand troops and lots of cash to the endangered African nations, but this does not stop the invasion of Libya based Islamic terrorists, it simply helps to limit
the damage they do. Meanwhile Islamic terrorist supported and protected smugglers move cocaine (flown into West Africa from South America) and other drugs into Libya and eventually to Europe while weapons (at least 20,000 assault rifles, machine-guns, RPG launchers, mortars) stolen from Kaddafi era warehouses have gone south so far and more continue doing so.

The international recognition and anti-Islamic terrorist attitude of the Tobruk government appeals to most Libyans. Unfortunately many Libyans, especially the tribes in the south (where the oil is) want autonomy as well as more of the oil money. At the moment the various tribes rule the south and deals have to be made with each of them to keep oil operations going. Along the coast the Islamic terrorist groups have often made deals with local militias that are more interested in local autonomy than religious fanaticism. The problem with Libya is that most residents consider themselves Libyans but too many of them are not willing to cooperate to make the country work. More and more Libyans are realizing and accepting the fact that compromise and cooperation is necessary for all to prosper (or even survive) but widespread acceptance of this reality is happening very slowly. Most Libyans are fed up with the continuing violence. The 2011 rebellion against Kaddafi left over 30,000 dead but the infighting since then has killed nearly as many. Most major factions agree on peace but Islamic terrorist groups in Tripoli and Benghazi, aided by tribal factions that want more power and money, continue to fight.

Fighting continues in Benghazi with Hiftar forces continuing to slowly push Islamic terrorist groups out of the city. Some Islamic terrorist groups are fighting to the death in the few Benghazi neighborhoods they still hold, including areas near the port. This has forced aid shipments to unload at the port of Tobruk until the one in Benghazi is safe again. Over 500 have died and more than 2,000 wounded in three months of fighting.

Tobruk government forces continue to advance to the west along the coast and expand their control in the interior. Many tribal militias and nearly all army units are willing to work with Hiftar, who is a military professional and realizes that by keeping casualties low among his own forces he maintains an edge in morale and overall effectiveness. So during the last week or two casualties in Benghazi have been low (10-20 a day). The opposition continues to suffer heavy desertions and lack of coordination, which the Hiftar forces take advantage of. This reduction in Islamic terrorist presence in Benghazi led to the reopening of police stations and government offices in Benghazi over the last two weeks. As the Hiftar forces clear a neighborhood and people move back in one of the first things done is to establish a self-defense force (if only to call for armed help) and a police presence. The Tobruk forces, in part because of their UN recognition, work more closely and effectively with foreign aid organizations.

While Tripoli forces are attacking oil facilities in the east, Tobruk forces, controlled by general Hiftar, have seized portions of the Tunisian border including the key crossing at Ras Ajdir.

Not only is Libya losing oil income it is losing the people who can use it most efficiently. For example India has gotten some 3,000 of its citizens out of Libya so far. This is important because many of those Indians are highly trained medical and other technical personnel. So far over 200,000 foreign workers, who do a lot of the technical work and some of the harshest manual jobs have left. After 2011 it was difficult to restore government services and the economy because of corruption and a shortage of skilled foreign workers. Like all oil-rich Arab states, Libya depended on skilled foreigners for key technical jobs and unskilled foreigners for the dirty jobs no Libyan wanted to do (garbage collection and hard labor in general). Countries are unwilling to allow their citizens to return until the Libyans can assure the safety of the foreign workers. Some foreign workers hold. At the moment,
foreign companies have to make deals with local militias and keep lots of cash returned after 2012 relying for safety on the assurances of the company or local government they are working for. That changed this year when the civil war broke out in August. Plans to change Kaddafi-era banking and business laws to allow foreign companies to invest in and set up operations in Libya are also on handy for bribes and "security" thus there is very little foreign investment, or foreigners themselves.

In the south (Jufrā) a convoy of Islamic terrorists attacked an army checkpoint and killed 17 soldiers. The Islamic terrorist bases in the south are turning out more armed and trained (often minimally) men who are being sent out to drive the army and pro-government tribal militias away from the few roads, so the Islamic terrorists can freely move to and from the coast.

December 25, 2014: Islamic terrorists in speedboats attacked the oil storage tanks at the port of Es Sider, setting several of them on fire with RPG rockets. The attack also left 22 soldiers dead. It would eventually take nine days to bring the fires under control. Tobruk officials accused Sudan of backing the Islamic terrorist group that made the attack.

In the west (Sirte, 500 kilometers east of Tripoli), the 13 year old daughter of two Egyptian Christians (both doctors) was found dead. She had been taken on the 23rd when gunmen invaded her home, killed her parents and kidnapped her. Two younger sisters were left behind. The attackers were believed to be Islamic terrorists, who have been increasingly violent against everyone, especially non-Moslems. Many skilled Egyptians go to Libya for work, but that is less of an option now that Islamic terrorists have turned the country into a sanctuary for all manner of outlaw behavior.

December 27, 2014: In Tripoli a car bomb went off outside the headquarters of the force assigned to protect the few foreign diplomats still stationed in the city. ISIL claimed responsibility for the attack, meant to discourage any non-Moslem foreigners from remaining in Libya. There aren’t many, most of them working for the UN. ISIL considers the UN an enemy of Islam.

December 29, 2014: The Libyan Air Force began daily air attacks on militias based in Misrata.

December 30, 2014: A Libyan Air Force jet shot down a pro-Tripoli helicopter that was being used to attack oil facilities in Es Sider. This was the second such helicopter shoot down recently.

In Tobruk a suicide car bomb went off outside parliament, wounding a few people. This attack was believed to have been planned in the ISIL controlled town of Derna.

In the south (Jufrā) a convoy of Islamic terrorists attacked an army checkpoint and killed 17 soldiers. The Islamic terrorist bases in the south are turning out more armed and trained (often minimally) men who are being sent out to drive the army and pro-government tribal militias away from the few roads, so the Islamic terrorists can freely move to and from the coast.

How Bad Was Libyan Leader Muammar Al-Quadhafi?
(AFricAn LEADERSHIP MAGAZINE BLOG September 16, 2015)
While the world celebrates Al-Quadhafi's downfall and removal, the response across Africa is more muted. Could that be because we always saw through the Western media's propaganda, even while acknowledging the man's deep flaws?

This is one of those cases where the Western view is slightly at odds with the African view, and I write this aware of the dangers of making sweeping generalisations. It’s hard to believe now, but Libya in the 1950s and early 60s
was pro-Western, and the Western media absolutely loved it. Then Al-Quadhafi seized power in September 1969, shut the American and British bases and partly nationalised the foreign oil and commercial interests.

He then made a point of praising and supporting anyone the Americans and Brits didn’t approve of: Japanese Red army, the IRA, Palestinian groups, Idi Amin, the Soviet Union, and so on. American and British media reacted by demonising and ridiculing Al-Quadhafi every chance it got, and helped people in the West form their opinions of him as this camel-riding lunatic in the desert.

The United States of Africa
But, while Quadhafi was ruling Libya with an iron fist, eliminating all political opposition and restricting the lives of Libyans, he was also doing more for the country than many African leaders (democratically-elected or otherwise) ever did for theirs. Sure, we in Africa know, too, that it’s time for the dude to go — even while dreaming of a United States of Africa he was quite divisive in his relations with the rest of the continent, and from time to time he expelled black Africans en masse from Libya and encouraged xenophobia against them — but we’re also very aware that the average Libyan has had it better than the average citizens of most other African countries due to his leadership.

He always supported SWAPO in Namibia and the ANC in the dark days of South Africa [Mandela visited Libya to thank him almost as soon as he came out of prison]. And, it has to be said, you will not be hated in Africa if, as a leader, you have the guts to say up yours to America, the UK or France, and that’s what Quadhafi did for 4 decades. For these reasons the feelings of many of us towards him are nowhere near as strong as those people in the West have been encouraged to develop by their media.

Here’s the BBC on what he also did:

During Muammar Al-Quadhafi’s 42-year rule, Libya has made great strides socially and economically thanks to its vast oil income, but tribes and clans continue to be part of the demographic landscape.

Women in Libya are free to work and to dress as they like, subject to family constraints. Life expectancy is in the seventies. And per capita income – while not as high as could be expected given Libya’s oil wealth and relatively small population of 6.5m – is estimated at $12,000 (£9,000), according to the World Bank.

You have the guts to say 'up yours' to America

Illiteracy has been almost wiped out, as has homelessness – a chronic problem in the pre-Quadhafi era, where corrugated iron shacks dotted many urban centres around the country. – Libya crisis: what role do tribal loyalties play? BBC Monitoring, 21st February, 2011

Compare Libya’s country profile with any other in sub-Saharan Africa and you’ll see that this guy, unlike too many of the crap leaders the continent has endured in the last few decades, didn’t just say “fuck you” to his people.

Compare Libya’s GDP per capita ($12K+) with countries like Nigeria ($1K+) or Botswana, probably the most stable “democracy” in Africa at $6K+. Democracy
is not always the solution; sometimes it’s nothing more than a money-wasting farce.

Al-Quadhafi was a dictator, he supported many questionable cause and held on to power for too long, and it is best that he goes now, but while we celebrate his removal let’s not completely erase our memories of what else he did, or forget why many of us were also, from time to time, rather proud of him, frustrating as he may have been.

Source: This Africa

LEADERSHIP: Top 10 Good Things About Gaddafi They Don’t Want You to Know

What do you think of when you hear the name Colonel Gaddafi? Tyrant? Dictator? Terrorist? Well, a national citizen of Libya may disagree but we want you to decide.

For 41 years until his demise in October 2011, Muammar Gaddafi did some truly amazing things for his country and repeatedly tried to unite and empower the whole of Africa.

So despite what you’ve heard on the radio, seen in the media or on the TV, Gaddafi did some powerful things that are not characteristic of a “vicious dictator” as portrayed by the western media.

Here are ten things Gaddafi did for Libya that you may not know about...

. In Libya a home is considered a natural human right

In Gaddafi’s Green Book it states: “The house is a basic need of both the individual and the family, therefore it should not be owned by others”. Gaddafi’s Green Book is the formal leader’s political philosophy, it was first published in 1975 and was intended reading for all Libyans even being included in the national curriculum.

2. Education and medical treatment were all free for all Libyans

Under Gaddafi, Libya could boast one of the best healthcare services in the Middle East and Africa. Also if a Libyan citizen could not access the desired educational course or correct medical treatment in Libya they were funded to go abroad.

3. He carried out the world’s largest man made River & irrigation project

The largest irrigation system in the world also known as the great manmade river was designed to make water readily available to all Libyan’s across the entire country. It was funded by the Gaddafi
government and it said that Gaddafi himself called it “the eighth wonder of the world”.

4. It was free to start a farming business

If any Libyan wanted to start a farm they were given a house, farm land and livestock and seeds all free of charge.

5. A bursary was given to mothers with newborn babies

When a Libyan woman gave birth she was given 5000 (US dollars) for herself and the child.

6. Electricity was free

Electricity was free in Libya meaning absolutely no electric bills!

7. Cheap petrol

During Gaddafi’s reign the price of petrol in Libya was as low as 0.14 (US dollars) per-litre.

8. Gaddafi raised the level of education

Before Gaddafi only 25% of Libyans were literate. This figure was brought up to 87% with 25% earning university degrees.

9. Libya had its own state bank

10. The West Planned it all

There is a clear growing conspiracy theory and belief that America planned all these, now Africans are starting to believe this.

Bonus: The gold dinar

Before the fall of Tripoli and his untimely demise, Gaddafi was trying to introduce a single African currency linked to gold. Following in the footsteps of the late great pioneer Marcus Garvey who first coined the term “United States of Africa”. Gaddafi wanted to introduce and only trade in the African gold Dinar – a move which would have thrown the world economy into chaos.

The Dinar was widely opposed by the ‘elite’ of today’s society and who could blame them. African nations would have finally had the power to bring itself out of debt and poverty and only trade in this precious
commodity. They would have been able to finally say ‘no’ to external exploitation and charge whatever they felt suitable for precious resources. It has been said that the gold Dinar was the real reason for the NATO led rebellion, in a bid to oust the outspoken leader.

So, was Muammar Gaddafi a Terrorist?

Few can answer this question fairly, but if anyone can, it’s a Libyan citizen who has lived under his reign? Whatever the case, it seems rather apparent that he did some positive things for his country despite the infamous notoriety surrounding his name. And that’s something you should try to remember when judging in future. (Text ends)
COUNTRY FACT FILE

Location
Libya is a country in the Arab Maghreb region of North Africa at the Mediterranean coast of Africa.

Official title of the state
The Republic of Libya

Flag description:
The pre-September 1969 Royal Libyan flag reintroduced; Three horizontal bands of Red (top), Black (double width), and Green with a White-crescent and Star centered on the Black stripe; National Transitional Council reintroduced this flag design of the former Kingdom of Libya (1951 to 1969) on the 27th, February 2011. It replaced the former All-green banner promulgated by the Quadhafi regime in 1977. Colours represent the three major regions of the country: Red stands for Fezzan; Black symbolizes Cyrenaica; Green denotes Tripolitania; The Crescent and Star represent Islam, the main religion of the country.

Neighbours
Tunisia on N. Algeria on NW. Niger, Chad on S. Egypt on E.

Land boundaries; total 4,348 km. Border countries; Algeria 982 km, Chad 1,055 km, Egypt 1,115 km, Niger 354 km, Sudan 383 km, Tunisia 459 km.

Local division
3 traditional parts of the country are Tripolitania, Fezzan and Cyrenaica

22 states, known locally as “Baladiyah”, and 25 municipalities

Government type. Until recently Jamahiriya Shaabiyat system (General Peoples Congress), now turns to ‘The General National Congress’.

Legislation chamber

The General National Congress (GNC) formerly known as The General Peoples Congress (GPC), becomes a 200-seats assembly. 80 members drawn from competing parties, 120 individual or independent members drawn from the public, 20 independent women members voted into existence on right 7th of July, 2012. First parliamentary session held on 8th of October, 2012.

Form of State
The General National Congress; is the would be central policy-making body elected by the populace through direct election for 200 seats. According to the new Libyan constitution, national elections are direct, parliamentary system and multi-party elections were introduced in the draft-constitution.

Executive branch
Separated by Head of State & Head of Government elected for certain executive term limits to be decided by the upcoming Libyan constitution.
Former Rulers
1932-1942: Zentani Muhammad Al-Zentani
1939-1940: Abdul Razzaq Al-Sawsa
1940: Muhammad Al-Zaruq Rajab.
1949: Abdul Ati Al-Obeidi.
1951: King Mohammed Idris Al-Senussi
1969: Captain Muammar Al-Quadhafi (Abu-Minyar)
2011: Mustapha Abdul-jalil/Mahmoud Jibril (Transitional Executives)
2012: Current Ali Zeidan
Judicial chamber
Supreme Court
Capital city Tripoli (Tarabulus-Saabiyah) Altitude 81 mtrs/266 ft.
Geographic coordinates - 32.53N , 13.10E. It derived from the Greece word Tarabulus (Tara-Bu-Lus Al-Gharb) meaning for "the three cities". It was founded in the 7th century BC by the Phoenicians, who named it first Oea.
Names of main towns
Benghazi, Tobruk, Mitsurata, Al-khooms.
Date of independence
24 December, 1951.
Religions (Major)
Muslim 97%.
Main spoken languages
Arabic (official), Berber, Italiano spoken.
Currency unit
Libyan Dinar (LYD)=1000 Dirhams.
Area in Km2
1,759,540,00
Country area comparison in Africa
4 out of 55 states.
Demographic terms ;-)
Average annual population growth rate 2.117 %
Birth rate 24.58 births per 1,000 population
Death rate 3.4 deaths per 1,000 population
Average life expectancy; 77.47 years
Male 75.18 years; Female 79.88 years;
Illiteracy rate (%)
Male: 4, Female: 22
Average per capita income
USD 14, 000
Population density
3.7/km2
Urban population (%)
78
Contributor groups (%)
Farming, Fishing: 2, Industry: 83, Social service: 15
Main Export Items
Crude oil, refined petrol product.
Economy is based on:
Petrol and Agriculture
Climate
Hot and dry with mild-winters, Mediterranean along coast: Dry, extreme desert interior.
Extremes:
Lowest point; Sabkhat Guzayyil 47 mtrs.
Highest point; Bikkubitti 2,267 mtrs.
Weather of the Capital city Tripoli (Tarabulus) average annual temperature 20.10c.
Altitude 81 mtrs/266 ft
Hottest Month August 22-30oc average daily min. & max.
Coldest Month January 8-16o c.
Driest Month July 1mm average Rf.
Wettest Month December 94mm average Rf.
Measures
Metric system & Local measures also used: 1 Dramilky = 50 CM, 1 Passo =2 Dramilky, 2 Dramilky = 1 mtr, 1 Kile = 36 litres, 1 Ukia = 30.05 gms, 40 Ukia = 1 Oke, 40 Oke = 1 Kantar.
Time zone
Public holidays
1st September/revolution day/ 2 and 28 March, 11 June, All Muslim holidays.

Ethnic groups
Arab & Berber tribes; Warfalla, Beni-Walid, Tarhuna, Azzintan, Maslata, Arrujban, others.

Topographic & Environmental concern
Desert and semi-desert region 92% of the land with low mountains in N. higher mountains in S. and a narrow coastal zone. Environment: Desertification; limited natural freshwater resources; the Great Man-made River Project, the largest water development scheme in the world, brings water from large aquifers under the Sahara to coastal cities.

Economy;
Industry
Carpets works, textiles, leather shoes, petroleum, petro-chemicals, aluminum, iron and steel production, food-processing, handicrafts, cement.

Chief crops
Citrus, date-olives, grapes, other fruits, vegetables, grains, tobacco, peanuts, soybeans : cattle.

Natural resources
Petroleum, Natural-Gas, Gypsum.

Land in use (%)
Arable land: 2
Grassland: 8
Forest woods: 0
Other: 91 (Note: more than 90 % of Libya is desert or semi-desert).

Marine
Coastline; 1,770 km.

Commercial Sea ports:-
Tripoli (Tarabulus), Benghazi, Mitsurata (Misrata)

Development prospect;- 
The newly elected Libyan government's priority will be to speed up the rebuilding of the oil sector and to establish new systems of transparency and accountability. The government is to post a comprehensive list of government assets and contracts on the internet.

Post-internal conflict reconstruction costs will run into the tens of billions. UBI-France estimated that the electricity sector alone will need over $12bn. And cities such as Benghazi and Misrata are lobbying for more investment because they suffered decades of neglect under Quadhafi.