VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND INSURGENCY IN LIBYA:
A RISK ASSESSMENT

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MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

AaS	Ansar al-Sharia
AQ	Al-Qaeda
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASMB	Abu Salim Martyrs' Brigade
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CT	Counterterrorism
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DRG	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance
GOL	Government of Libya
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IOARB	Imprisoned Omar Abdel Rahman Brigades
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LIMC	Libyan Islamic Movement for Change
LSF	Libyan Shield Forces
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MUJAO	Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa
NOC	National Oil Corporation
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
RoL	Rule of Law
SSC(s)	Supreme Security Committee(s)
SRF	Special Reserve Forces
SSR	Security Sector Reform

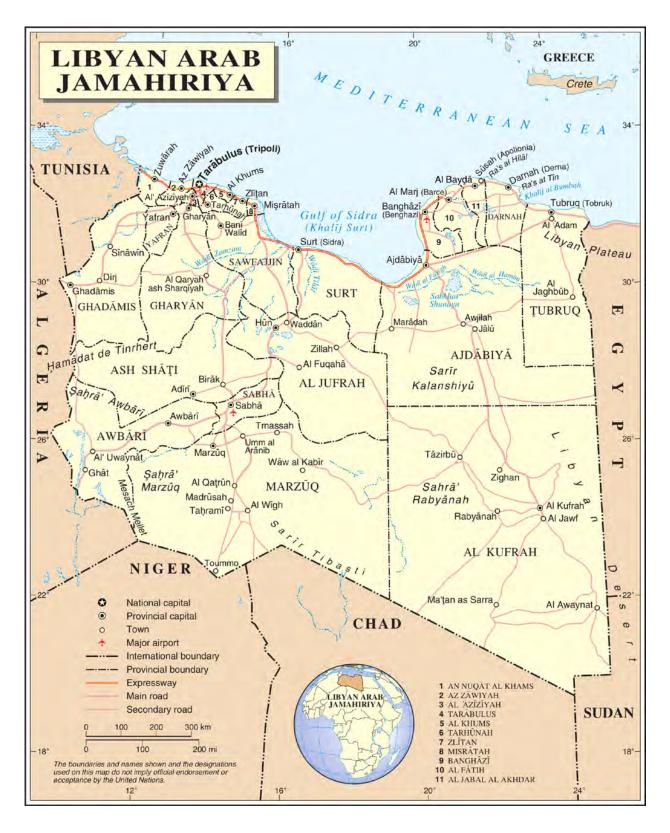| TFSL | Tabu Front for the Salvation of Libya |
TNC	Transitional National Council
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VE	Violent extremism or violent extremist
VE/I	Violent extremism and/or insurgency

MAP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The analysis in this document provides the USG with a roadmap for responding to the worrisome pattern of escalating violence that Libya has experienced since the spring of 2012. That pattern has included numerous terrorist attacks – first and foremost, from a USG perspective, the September 11, 2012 carefully planned and well-coordinated assault on the loosely guarded U.S. diplomatic Mission and nearby CIA annex in Benghazi, which resulted in the killing of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stephens and three other Americans. It has featured as well other strikes at Western diplomatic personnel and facilities, as well as the assassinations of Libyan political figures and senior security officials, inter-communal clashes, and fighting among militias as well as between them and government forces.

This report makes it clear that *while terrorism is a significant problem facing Libya, it is part of a much broader Violent Extremism (VE) challenge.* Feeding into that challenge are such inter-related deficits as the lack of credibility and capacity of government institutions; broader state fragility issues; the political system's lack of legitimacy; and serious gaps in service delivery. That situation creates a security vacuum of which various actors, including VEs, are taking advantage. From a policy perspective, therefore, if the objective is to neutralize terrorists, one cannot ignore the environment in which they move. *Consequently, the fight against VE in Libya cannot be approached narrowly, as a counterterrorism (CT) issue alone. Instead, it should be viewed as a broader countering violent extremism (CVE) challenge that calls for the deployment of a variety of tools, including, but not limited to, those related to CT.* Considering the magnitude of the security challenges that face Libya, even large CT investments will fail to resolve the terrorism problems at hand if they are not supported by interventions that address urgent institutional, governance and socioeconomic issues. At best, they will create temporary gains liable to be reversed very quickly due to lack of progress on related fronts.

This document addresses the question of whether Libya's VE challenge is primarily a home-grown issue or, instead, largely a by-product of cross-border dynamics and meddling by regional and transnational VE actors. While it recognizes the extent to which regional dynamics have compounded the violent extremism and/or insurgency (VE/I) risk in Libya, particularly since the French military intervention in Mali began in January 2013, **it deliberately and explicitly emphasizes the domestic dimensions of the problem.** To be sure, jihadist groups pushed out of their strongholds in Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and other northern Mali towns and cities have moved north toward southern Libya, through established Saharan routes in Algeria and Niger. And it seems plausible, as some reports suggest (but without providing solid evidence), that some jihadists formerly based in northern Mali may even have joined like-minded radical Salafis in Benghazi and Darnah. Moreover, French operations in Mali may have galvanized radical Salafi elements inside Libya by providing them with yet another example of Western military intervention directed at fellow Muslims (and Salafi jihadists). In reality, however, those jihadists ejected from their bases in Mali have made their way to southern Libya, and not elsewhere, because of Libya-specific reasons, including:

- the security vacuum that prevails there;

- the presence of a broader, chaotic environment that is conducive to VE activity;

- the existence of homegrown VE groups that have shown some ability to embed themselves in society, including through social work; and

- an indigenous history or radical Salafi activity that goes back several decades.

Those are domestic drivers that need to be addressed, even as one recognizes the cross-border and regional dynamics that feed into them. Unless they are tackled, Libya will become even more of a magnet for jihadists and the regional insurgency they increasingly are fueling.

From a VE perspective, indigenous radical Salafi groups still represent the primary threat in Libya. One relative advantage of that situation is that society and government alike have more leverage over local groups than over transnational actors. Another is that local actors are less likely to take matters beyond a certain point than is true of the transnational ones. Should transnational networks become more influential in shaping the course of Libyan events, the VE risk would increase markedly.

The primary driver behind the VE threat consists of the country's security gaps. While the solution to that problem lies largely beyond the scope of development assistance, security deficits also are, to some extent at least, by-products of a broader crisis of governance. Consequently, interventions that aim to enhance the quality of governance can help mitigate the VE threat. While they may not address directly the "first-order driver" (security), they can help nurture the broader environment that will enable security sector reform, while diminishing the salience of other drivers of VE, including in service delivery.

The most likely scenario under which VE groups could gain additional traction would entail a further erosion in nation-wide governance, caused or accompanied by growing political polarization, wrangling and jockeying for political or personal advantage among key leaders, and resulting in institutional paralysis and policy gridlock. Political disarray would thwart security sector reform, impede decision-making in general, and compound existing security deficits (including by providing disincentives for armed groups to relinquish their weapons to a state unable to guarantee order and personal safety). An intensified crisis of governance also would provide opportunities for radical groups to broaden their appeal by filling in related gaps in the delivery of basic public services, and by taking advantage of chaos and lawlessness to lash out at their various enemies. Governance-focused programming designed to reduce the likelihood of such a scenario is appropriate and recommended.

Were they to become endemic or even escalate, the violent clashes that have pitted ethnic and tribal groups against one another, particularly in the south, also have the potential to enhance the risk of VE and/or Insurgency (VE/I), both directly and indirectly. They may do so by feeding into the lawlessness and chaos that VE organizations can exploit; by being co-opted by those organizations; or by sapping even further confidence in the state in general, and in its ability to regulate social and political disputes in particular. Communal clashes also are becoming more tied to cross-border smuggling and trafficking, thus fueling tactical complicities between those involved in that trafficking and violent extremists.

The drivers behind communal violence are multi-dimensional and not always easily amenable to development assistance. The multiplicity of actors, logics and variables, and the fluid nature of the social and political terrain create substantive hurdles for programming. However, the southern part of the country also includes locations in which donors can operate with reasonable safety and efficacy. Given the longstanding neglect of, and poverty that prevails in, southern areas, even limited assistance may have a consequential impact. Moreover, the new local government law, which may be put into implementation shortly, contains elements that could be leveraged to tackle underlying drivers of violence in a far more systematic and sustainable manner than is the case under the current crisis response mechanism.

It also may be worth exploring the extent to which development assistance can support the various "antibodies" on which Libyan society can draw to protect itself against the disease of radical Salafi violence. There is much in Libyan culture and social mores that makes it difficult for violent Salafis to gain lasting traction and broaden their base. Even in those areas where they have a strong presence and particularly disruptive impact, radical Salafis have encountered stiff resistance from across the entire spectrum of Libyan social actors and organizations. Whether development assistance can support that pushback deserves consideration.

In short, as long as USAID remains mindful of the programming complexities and potential pitfalls noted above, targeted efforts to address key drivers of communal violence may be useful. Given limited USAID funding and the challenging implementation environment, reliance on very focused, higher-impact

interventions and/or partnering with other donors may be particularly relevant. Drivers that should receive particular attention are those that, if left unaddressed, could facilitate the morphing of communal violence into VE, or might help that violence feed into an environment that, in turn, will increase the VE/I risk. Because improved security remains the single most important piece of that puzzle, governance-related interventions that contribute to that objective should receive particular attention. Other activities to consider include those that may help:

- Overcome the legacies of social and economic neglect of some communities (including through the provision of basic services and infrastructure);

- (Re)shape local governance systems in such a way as to make them more inclusive of hitherto excluded groups;

- Correct past discriminatory policies and prevent new forms of systematic discrimination against some communities; and

- Address sources of regional or community-based disaffection rooted, at least in part, in factors that are amenable to development assistance.

Overall, while the primary, "first-order" drivers of the VE/I risk in Libya – the country's security gaps and the complicated dynamics that pit communities against one another and/or the state – cannot be easily remedied by development interventions, such interventions may help address "second-order drivers" of the VE/I risk by tackling the significant gaps that exist in two key, related areas: governance dysfunctions at both the national and local levels, and the inadequate (and in many ways inexistent) relationship between national-level and local-level governance.

INTRODUCTION

This report assesses the nature and scope of Libya's violent extremism (VE) problem, identifies the drivers behind it, and evaluates the potential role of development assistance in mitigating it. It draws on a comprehensive and up-to-date review of existing sources on the topic, though it should be read with the understanding that, being a desk study, it cannot provide conclusive answers to questions that would require on-the-ground investigation. For instance, field research would be needed to identify the competing sets of interests and grievances embedded in different militias, thus helping one determine the extent to which governance-related interventions might help address the destabilizing dynamics associated with them. Some of the complex regional dimensions of violent extremist activity in Libya – for instance the exact nature of the relationship between Ansar al-Sharia Brigade in Benghazi and Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia – also would necessitate detailed informant interviews beyond the reach of a desk study, as would a granular understanding of the social base of Libyan VE in some of its historical strongholds, such as Darnah. These inherent limitations notwithstanding, this report provides a general frame and set of observations that should be of use to decision-makers tasked with analyzing, and programming against, VE in Libya. It is organized as follows:

- Part One explores the main forms of political violence since the downfall of the Qaddafi regime in October 2011. It pays particular attention to the forces that have sustained radical Salafi militancy, and examines as well the dynamics behind the clashes that have pitted tribes and ethnic groups against one another, since they represent an important component of the overall VE environment for Libya.

- Part Two begins with a recapitulation of the main drivers behind recent manifestations of political violence in Libya, highlighting the ways in which these drivers relate to one another. It then moves on to outlining the conditions under which existing forms of VE might escalate into a bigger threat. As importantly, it reflects on the factors that might prompt types of violence that are not currently of a VE nature to evolve into a specific VE or insurgency danger.

- Part Three discusses the programmatic implications of the analysis conducted in Parts One and Two.

Before it is discussed further, however, the issue of VE in Libya must be placed in the context of this past year's dramatic events, both in Libya and in its surrounding region. Those events, and the policy and programming-related issues they raise, constitute the backdrop and *raison d'être* for this document; consequently, they are addressed here, albeit briefly, so as to introduce the frame through which the remainder of the document explores Libya's VE challenge.

Spring 2012-Spring 2013 VE Highlights

Since the spring of 2012, Libya has experienced a steady increase in Islamic extremist activity that has included terrorist attacks, assassinations of political figures and senior security officials, inter-communal clashes, and fighting among militias as well as between them and government forces. As far as terrorism and the United States Government (USG) are concerned, the most consequential and traumatic event was the September 11, 2012 carefully planned and well-coordinated assault on the loosely guarded U.S. diplomatic Mission and nearby CIA annex in Benghazi, which resulted in the killing of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stephens and three other Americans. This terrorist act did not occur in a vacuum. It was preceded by attacks on humanitarian organizations (including the International Committee of the Red Cross) as well as the British and Tunisian consulates in Benghazi. Though responsibility for the assault on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi has yet to be firmly established, chief suspects include the radical Salafi organization known as Imprisoned Omar Abdel Rahman Brigades (IOARB) as well as individuals affiliated with the Libyan Ansar al-Sharia (AaS) group, even though the latter has denied involvement in the attack.

Since September 2012, the security situation in Libya has deteriorated even further. Nowhere is this more visible than in southern Libya, which in the past several months has become a new destination for militants pushed out of Mali by French military operations there.[1] Indeed, those responsible for carrying out the May 23, 2013 twin suicide bombings in Niger may have come from southern Libya.[2]

Meanwhile, in the coastal cities of Benghazi and Darnah, and in eastern Libya more generally, radical Islamic groups have created an atmosphere of lawlessness. Police stations in both Benghazi and Darnah were bombed on several occasions last April. Benghazi has become increasingly insecure and a no-go zone for foreigners, especially in the wake of the attempted ambush of the Italian consul in January 2013, the fire-bombing of an Egyptian Coptic Church on March 14, 2013, and repeated reports of danger to the safety of Westerners in that city (in response to which several Western governments urged their citizens to leave Benghazi in late January 2013). In late April, Chadian President Idriss Déby claimed that Benghazi had become home to training camps for violent Chadian militants.

The terrorist threat in and to Libya is no longer confined primarily to the southern and eastern parts of the country, as the April 23, 2013 bombing of the French Embassy in Tripoli demonstrated vividly. The attack, which destroyed nearly half of the building, is widely attributed to radical Salafis. It is believed to have been carried out in reprisal for France's military intervention in Mali (including France's decision, the day before the attack, to extend its military mission in that country). The bombing was significant not only in that it represented the most spectacular strike at a Western interest in the country since the killing of Ambassador Stevens seven months earlier, but also because it was the first major attack on a Western target, and against foreign interests more generally, in the Libyan capital since the fall of Qaddafi.

Understanding the Nature of the Threat and the Appropriate Response to it

From a USG policy and programming perspective, the background summarized above raises two main, inter-related issues:

1) How should the terrorism challenge confronting Libya be conceptualized, and, therefore, what should be the nature and breadth of the response to it?
2) Particularly in light of claims that Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Al-Qaeda (AQ) more broadly may have played a role in the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, and considering as well broader suggestions of external involvement with Libya's VE groups, should Libya's VE problem be viewed as rooted largely in regional dynamics (with Libya itself being primarily a place where regional dynamics play themselves out)? Or should VE activity in Libya also be understood as shaped, to a very large extent, by domestic causes, including governance- and development-related deficits?

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[1] The French military intervention began on January 11, 2013.

[2] The attacks targeted a military base in Agadez and a uranium mine in Arlit run by the French firm Areva. The attack on the base caused the death of 24 soldiers. One French employee died in the bombing in Arlit. In both cases, dozens were wounded as well. Reports suggested that the twin bombings were orchestrated by the Algerian radical Islamic mastermind Mokhtar Belmokhtar, formerly an AQIM leader who in late 2012 split off from AQIM to create his own organization, the "Those who Sign with Blood" (*al-Muaqi`un Biddam*) Brigade. Belmokhtar and his new group already had been responsible for the January 16, 2013 attack on the In Aménas gas facility in Algeria, near the Libyan border, which resulted in the death of 39 hostages. Nearly three months ago, the Chadian army had reported that Belmokhtar had been killed on March 2, 2013, during a Chadian raid on a jihadist base in northern Mali. That report, however, never was confirmed by other sources (including the French authorities). Under those conditions, one should consider plausible claims by Belmokhtar's organization that it and another AQIM split-off, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), jointly carried out the suicide bombings in Niger. The attack on the mine in Arlit presumably was in retaliation for the French intervention in Mali, while that on the military base in Agadez may have been to punish the government of Niger for its role in Mali and against the radical militants of *Boko Haram* in Nigeria. On May 25, 2013, Niger President Mahamadou Issoufou stated that the suicide bombers had crossed into Niger from southern Libya.

Subsequent sections of this report will provide the detailed analysis, evidence and historical context to answer these questions; the main conclusions are summarized below.

1) *Terrorism is a significant problem facing Libya, but it is part of a much broader VE challenge.* Feeding into that challenge are such inter-related deficits as the lack of credibility and capacity of government institutions; broader state fragility issues; the political system's lack of legitimacy; and serious gaps in service delivery. That situation creates a security vacuum of which various actors, including VEs, are taking advantage. From a policy perspective, therefore, if the objective is to neutralize terrorists, one cannot ignore the environment in which they move. *Consequently, the fight against VE in Libya cannot be approached narrowly, as a counterterrorism (CT) issue alone. Instead, it should be viewed as a broader countering violent extremism (CVE) challenge that calls for the deployment of a variety of tools, including, but not limited to, those related to CT.* For instance, assistance to the Libyan armed forces and police – including the provision of equipment, training, and logistical support for border control – may be needed to enhance security. But that is not enough, and, on its own, it is not a strategy that is viable or sustainable, both for a donor and for the Government of Libya (GOL). For any gains generated by CT approaches to be sustained, it is essential to address as well the political, social and governmental dysfunctions that create the lawlessness, chaos and grievances of which terrorists as well as other VE actors can take advantage. Those dysfunctions include a weak state, a political system that has not yet generated (and for good reasons) broad buy-in by the population, social divisions and a bureaucracy that repeatedly has been brought to a halt by militias.

   Considering the magnitude of the security challenges that face Libya, even large CT investments will fail to resolve the terrorism problems at hand if they are not supported by interventions that address urgent institutional, governance and socioeconomic issues. At best, they will create temporary gains liable to be reversed very quickly due to lack of progress on related fronts. To be sure, it would be reductionist to portray the lack of security as a mere byproduct of poor governance and flawed politics. In reality, as the report demonstrates, external variables also feed into, and exacerbate, security deficits. Moreover, the domestic roots of those deficits are not limited to governance gaps and dysfunctional political processes. Nonetheless, Libya's political and governability crisis represents a major force behind the country's security vacuum. That vacuum cannot be filled unless and until the crisis in question is addressed. Addressing that crisis, in turn, calls for the deployment of a broad range of CVE approaches, from CT tools to development-aid and democracy-assistance interventions. Improved border control, support for law enforcement agencies, rule of law programming and comprehensive security sector reform are all important, but assistance to such processes must be coupled with efforts to address the institutional, political and socioeconomic roots of insecurity and violence. CT measures alone, important as they are, will do little to address the broad-based citizen alienation that feeds into state fragility and provides room within which violent non-state actors can operate. There is no substitute for a comprehensive CVE strategy that prioritizes the struggles to establish a legitimate political order and create authoritative, credible and effective governmental decision-making processes and institutions capable of delivering good governance. That is a process to which donors can contribute, along lines this report discusses.

2) To the question of whether Libya's VE challenge is primarily a home-grown issue or, instead, largely a by-product of cross-border dynamics and meddling by regional and transnational VE actors, this document provides a mixed response – though one that deliberately and explicitly emphasizes the domestic dimensions of the problem. *There is no doubt that, especially in the past few months, as the brief chronological overview above suggested, regional developments have exacerbated instability in Libya.* The French military intervention in Mali has been particularly decisive in that regard. Jihadist groups pushed out of their strongholds in Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and other northern Mali towns and cities have moved north toward southern Libya, through established Saharan routes in Algeria and Niger. And it seems plausible, as some reports suggest (but without providing solid evidence), that some jihadists

formerly based in northern Mali even may have joined like-minded radical Salafis in Benghazi and Darnah. Moreover, French operations in Mali may have galvanized radical Salafi elements inside Libya by providing them with yet another example of Western military intervention directed at fellow Muslims (and SJs). In the end, however, *those jihadists ejected from their bases in Mali have made their way to southern Libya, and not elsewhere, because of Libya-specific reasons, including the security vacuum that prevails there;* the presence of a broader, chaotic environment that is conducive to VE activity; the existence of homegrown VE groups that have shown some ability to embed themselves in society, including through social work; and a history of radical Salafi activity that goes back several decades.[3] Those are domestic drivers that need to be addressed, even as one recognizes the cross-border and regional dynamics that feed into them. Unless they are tackled, Libya will become even more of a magnet for jihadists and the regional insurgency they increasingly are fueling.

PART ONE: TYPES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN POST-QADDAFI LIBYA

Since the overthrow of the Qaddafi regime and the Transitional National Council's (TNC) formal proclamation of the liberation of the country in October 2011, Libya has experienced two main kinds of violence: the first has been carried out by radical Salafi elements, primarily but not only in the east, especially Darnah and Benghazi; and the second has pitted tribes, cities, towns and/or ethnic communities against each other, in the south as well as elsewhere (e.g., Misratans vs. members of the Twarga tribe, the Mashashiya vs. the Zintan, Khalayfa or Kikla, and Bani Walid vs. Misrata).

A few other types of violence should be mentioned, albeit more briefly since they are less significant for the purposes of this assessment, have generated fewer fatalities, and have declined in frequency and overall impact on national as well as regional trends. One such type is related to pro-independence or separatist demands in the east (which also have a tribal foundation). When the "Cyrenaica Transitional Council" (or "Barqa Council," set up in March 2012) developed its own armed wing, *Jaysh Barqa* (the Army of Barqa), concerns rose that unmet calls for far-reaching financial and administrative autonomy for the east might trigger violence. And in the run-up to the July 7, 2012 parliamentary elections, individuals affiliated with the Council did resort to armed action in their efforts to bring attention to their demands. For instance, in an attempt to disrupt the voting process, demonstrators stormed the electoral commission's offices in Benghazi on July 1. On another occasion, a voting station in Benghazi was attacked, and a helicopter carrying election materials was fired upon. These were isolated incidents, however. By and large, in its efforts to secure political concessions from the NTC, the Council instead relied on non-violent tactics, such as roadblocks and demonstrations. Moreover, efforts by activists in the east to "push the envelope" (in terms of both agenda and tactics) backfired in some important respects. For instance, high electoral turnout and the results of the elections themselves (including in Benghazi) dealt a significant blow to those who had advocated extensive federalism and/or a boycott of the elections.[4] That being said, federalists did secure a critical amendment to the constitution that was consistent with the Barqa Council's proposal to elect the members of the constitution drafting body.[5] Moreover, on June 5, 2013, the GOL issued a decree instructing the National Oil Corporation (NOC), Libyan Airlines, the Libya Company for Insurance, and the Internal Investment Company to relocate their headquarters to Benghazi (where the NOC and Libyan Airlines used to be until

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[3] One thinks, in particular, of the Islamist insurgency of the mid-1990s in eastern Libya, or, more recently, of the role that cities such as Darnah and Benghazi played as major sources of foreign fighters for the Iraqi insurgency. For additional details, see Part One.

[4] See Wehrey, "The Struggle for Security in Eastern Libya," pp. 6-8.

[5] By design or not, that amendment has slowed Libya's transition and ultimately it probably will result in a constituent assembly that will be less inclusive of ethnic minorities than would have been the case if the assembly had been appointed instead.

Qaddafi removed them). The decision was widely viewed as a victory for federalists (but also to many others across the eastern part of the country).

Another form of political violence not discussed in any detail below relates to clashes pitting revolutionary brigades against one another, or against post-revolutionary brigades.[6] Such confrontations took place in Tripoli itself in the months that followed the capital's fall in October 2011. Revolutionaries from Tripoli often fought their counterparts affiliated with the Misrata and Zintan revolutionary brigades (or coalitions of brigades) that had come to wield considerable influence in the Libyan capital. These turf battles have subsided somewhat in recent months, due in part to the formation of auxiliary forces such as the Libya Shield Forces (LSF), the Supreme Security Committees (SSCs), and the Special Reserve Forces (SRF), all of which have provided for the partial integration of *thuwwar* (revolutionaries) into nominally state-dependent structures.[7] By and large, armed clashes involving revolutionary and/or post-revolutionary brigades have remained contained and, if anything, this particular form of violence generates less concern among analysts than it did a year ago – though Zintani brigades, for instance, often still leverage their military strength for political gains. Overall, clashes that pit brigades against each other do not impact directly and in a significant way the VE/I risk; if they were to escalate, however, they might do so by worsening an already fragile security situation. Until an effective neutral force under government authority emerges that can manage inter-militia clashes, such armed confrontations will exacerbate security deficits, disrupt political life, and undermine the state's capacity to govern.

A. Radical Salafi Violence

Violent Salafis constitute the most immediate and significant threat from a VE perspective, and the danger they pose is first and foremost a by-product of security gaps in the country. They are active primarily in some of the enclaves they have created for themselves in the east, particularly in and around Darnah and Benghazi, but they operate elsewhere as well, including in Misrata, Tripoli, and throughout the south. Violence carried out by radical Salafis – including the desecration of Sufi shrines in Tripoli, Benghazi and Zliten, attacks on the offices of the UN and the ICRC in May 2012, and an attempt on the British Ambassador's life the following month – escalated steadily through the first nine months of 2012, before culminating in the assault on the US Mission in Benghazi on September 11. Since then, radical Salafis also have been blamed for the ambush of the Italian consul in Benghazi in January 2013 and for the April 2013 bombing of the French Embassy in Tripoli.

Historical Perspectives

The historical roots of violent Salafism in Libya go back to the formation of a handful of jihadist cells in the eastern province during the 1970s, and to the participation of an estimated 800-1,000 young Libyans in the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan during the 1980s.[8] In 1990, returnees from Afghanistan established the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). After operating clandestinely for several years, the LIFG (the membership of which was limited to a few hundred members) launched a low-level insurgency in 1995. Based mainly in eastern Libya, that insurgency included three attempts on Qaddafi's life and lasted until 1998, by which time it had been crushed by the regime. Those among its members who were not killed either fled

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[6]"Revolutionary brigades" refers to armed groups formed from February through October 2011 in order to fight the Qaddafi regime. The expression "post-revolutionary brigades" designates those armed groups generally established after October 2011 in pro-Qaddafi neighborhoods or towns such as Bani Walid or Sirte, and that were set up with the explicit purpose of protecting these former loyalist strongholds against retribution and provide other basic services to their populations. See ICG, "Divided We Stand," p. 37 as well as Brian McQuinn, "Armed Groups in Libya: Typology and Roles." Tribal and family ties are important forces behind revolutionary and post-revolutionary brigades alike.

[7] The general consensus seems to be that auxiliary forces have met with only limited success in their efforts to rein in militias. The SRF is the most successful and legitimate such entity to date. In the east, the LSF are widely considered to be Muslim Brotherhood-backed, Misratan-controlled Islamists.

[8] See ICG, "Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (V): Making Sense of Libya," pp. 20-21.

Libya or were incarcerated at the notorious Abu Salim prison in Tripoli, where many underwent torture. But while the LIFG was incapacitated at home, it remained active abroad. In exile, former members of the LIFG often drifted into the orbit of Al-Qaeda (AQ) and the Taliban. Many passed through AQ camps in Afghanistan and/or gave a religious oath of loyalty (*bay`a*) to Taliban leader Mullah Omar. A few fought in Bosnia, Chechnya, and other theaters of the global jihad. A handful of the LIFG's historical leaders held high-ranking positions within AQ and were close associates of Ben Laden himself.[9] And yet, while at the individual level many links were forged between the LIFG and AQ, the former organization never formally joined the latter.

In the early 2000s, a new generation of Libyan Salafi jihadists (SJs) (sometimes the sons and other relatives of militants killed or tortured during the 1980s and 1990s) joined veterans from earlier struggles and fought on the Pakistani-Afghan border, often alongside the Taliban. Following 9/11, many of them fled Afghanistan and after March 2003 some made their way to Iraq to take part in the fight against the American occupation. Libyans arrested in Iraq and elsewhere often were sent back to Libya by the American or British intelligence services.[10]

Revealingly, Libyans may have represented the second largest contingent of foreigners involved in the Iraqi insurgency, with only Saudis making up a larger segment.[11] Evidence for this includes records that the coalition forces in Iraq seized in October 2007, during a raid near Sinjar, along Iraq's Syrian border. West Point's Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) subsequently analyzed these records, which consisted of files on nearly 700 foreign nationals who had entered Iraq to join the insurgency between August 2006 and August 2007.[12] Out of the 700 files, 595 included the fighter's country of origin and hometown. One of the most interesting findings in the CTC report concerned the high percentage of fighters of Libyan origin. After Saudi Arabia, Libya was the next most common country of origin, with 18.2 percent of the fighters hailing from Libya (as opposed to 41 percent for Saudi Arabia). On a per capita basis, Libya contributed far more than any other country (almost 19 fighters per one million residents in home country), including Saudi Arabia (for which the corresponding figure was approximately nine fighters). Equally revealing was the data on the home city or town of the fighters. The most common cities from which the fighters hailed were Darnah and Riyadh, nearly tied at 52 and 51 fighters respectively – though if per capita numbers of fighters are taken into consideration, Darnah (with a population at the time of just over 80,000 as opposed to Riyadh's 4.3 million) outdistanced easily all other city or town of origin. Benghazi was the fourth most common home city or town (after Darnah, Riyadh, and Mecca). As far as Libyan hometowns were concerned, Darnah and Benghazi were the place of origin of 84.1 percent of all Libyan fighters who made their way to Iraq between August 2006 and August 2007 in the Sinjar records.

From 2007 onward, an entirely different trend unfolded inside Libya, where imprisoned LIFG cadres underwent a process of "de-radicalization" made possible by the convergence of two factors: a shift in the thinking of key LIFG figures and an amnesty program championed by Qaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam.[13] Modeled after the Egyptian de-radicalization experiment that had targeted members of *al-Jihad* and *Jama`a islamiyya*, this process resulted in the publication in August 2009 of a 416-page book entitled *Corrective Studies in*

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[9] One thinks here of, most notably, Abu Laith al-Libi and Abu Yahya al-Libi.

[10] Adb al-Hakim Belhaj, a founder and former commander of the LIFG, fought in Afghanistan with Ben Laden, returned to Libya in the early 1990s, and fled the country again to escape the regime's brutal crackdown on the LIFG and other Islamists. He was arrested in Thailand by the CIA in 2004 and handed over to the Libyan regime. Belhaj subsequently claimed he was tortured at the behest of US and British intelligence agencies under the rendition program. Incarcerated at the Abu Salim prison in Tripoli, he was released in 2009 under Saif al-Islam Qaddafi's "de-radicalization program." He joined the uprising in February 2011, became the leader of the Tripoli Brigade and led the assault on Qaddafi's Bab al-Aziziya compound in August 2011, after which he became military commander of Tripoli. Widely viewed as a client of Qatar, he faced fierce opposition from the leaders of the revolutionary brigades of Misrata and Zintan, who became very influential in the Libyan capital. He resigned his position as head of the Tripoli Military Council in May 2012, when he formed the Hizb al-Watan Islamic party.

[11] Richard Oppel, "Foreign Fighters in Iraq Are Tied to Allies of US," *The New York Times*, November 22, 2007.

[12] See Felter and Fishman, "Al-Qa'ida's Foreign Fighters in Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records."

[13] On the "deradicalization" of the LIFG, see for instance Rabasa et al, "Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists," pp. 84-88.

Understanding Jihad, Enforcement of Morality, and the Judgment of the People. Authored by six key LIFG leaders and ideologues, the book provided a thorough refutation, on theological grounds, of the violence in which the LIFG had engaged, and of jihadist ideology more generally. It repudiated armed opposition to the Qaddafi regime and was heralded as one of the most striking examples in the region of former jihadists recanting the ideas and methods they once had embraced.[14] Its publication was followed by the release of a few hundred Islamist militants from prison. In 2010, former leaders of the LIFG declared the organization to be defunct.

Viewed by some observers as reflecting a genuine change of heart among former extremists, the "de-radicalization" of the LIFG was met with considerable skepticism by other analysts. What is certain is that not all those once affiliated with, or sympathetic to, the LIFG were equally affected by ideological revisionism and/or behavioral moderation. Younger members or sympathizers of the LIFG, in particular, often openly challenged and sought to de-legitimize the new, moderate positions now embraced by former ideologues of the LIFG. For one, those who fought in Iraq and on the Pakistani-Afghan border in the mid-to-late 1990s were far less likely to have relinquished their extremist positions than older militants who went through the long and painful experience of incarceration at Abu Salim. Moreover, even former LIFG members who publicly recanted their earlier advocacy of violence did not necessarily abandon their extremist views on such issues as women's proper position and roles in society, or the need for a strict implementation of the sharia.

Shortly after the uprising against the Qaddafi regime broke out in mid-February 2011, former LIFG members, together with a new generation of young Libyans with Islamist or Salafi convictions, were quick to join – and, in several cases, assume the leadership of – the newly formed revolutionary brigades. That was particularly true in Benghazi and the Green Mountains towns of Darnah and al-Bayda, which represented the LIFG's historical base. In the two years leading up to the upheaval, imprisoned Islamists and Salafis had benefited from what has been accurately described as Qaddafi's "half-baked" or "haphazard" amnesty program (which benefited militants whose renunciation of violence was not necessarily genuine, and who were freed under conditions that did not include provisions for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society).[15] In February and March 2011, the Libyan regime added to the number of Salafis and Islamists with a violent past now at large when it released more prisoners in what turned out to be a futile attempt to undercut the uprising's momentum. More such militants escaped from prison after fighting and chaos spread across the country.

In March 2011, former LIFG cadres created the Libyan Islamic Movement for Change (LIMC) in an effort to give themselves a distinct voice within the insurgency, and to facilitate the subsequent integration of their current into the post-Qaddafi political process. By then, Libya's Islamist and Salafi tendencies included individuals with widely different views on political and social issues, including on the legitimacy of violence and social coercion as tools for advancing their various agendas. Former LIFG fighters (*muqatileen*) advocating non-violence and democratic participation were fighting the regime side by side with Islamists who had not recanted their more extremist positions; a few SJs still viewed the popular upheaval through the prism of the global jihad advocated by the organizational remnants of AQ on the Pakistani-Afghan border, but their contingent was very small compared to the much larger number of those Islamists whose agenda was focused narrowly on Libya; and extremist Salafis shared the scene with more moderate strands. Be that as it may, the most important take-away point from this section should be clear: the radical Salafi trend in Libya has significant historical roots in the country. Consequently, its manifestations today cannot be reduced to a mere spill-over effect from developments in the broader region.

The Violent Salafi Threat Today

Efforts to assess the radical Salafi threat must walk a fine line between doing justice to the reality of that threat and not overstating it. On the one hand, radical Salafi groups have a small membership and, even in

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[14] It mattered symbolically that one of the book's main authors, `Abd al-Wahhab Qa'id, was the brother of a key Ben Laden aide, LIFG senior figure Abu Yahya al-Libi.
[15] See Boucek, "Islamist Terrorists in Libya."

the areas that are viewed as their bastions (such as Darnah), they face significant, open and active opposition from within Libyan society. Despite the severity of the political, economic and social problems found inside Libya, their message resonates with only a slim segment of the Libyan public, and there is no evidence that they have been gaining additional traction in recent months. Tensions over strategy and tactics as well as clashes of personal ambitions run deep inside the Salafi tendency. The April 16, 2013 assassination attempt against bin Qumu in Darnah likely was a reflection of these internal strains. On the other hand, these groups operate either publicly or just below the surface, and the security threat they pose was demonstrated all-too clearly by the well-prepared, coordinated and effectively orchestrated September 11, 2012 terrorist attack on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi. While still limited, the danger they pose is real, and it could escalate markedly under conditions that will be spelled out further below.

The radical Salafi movement in Libya is organizationally amorphous and diffused. It consists of a multiplicity of locally based groups that have no documented, substantive organizational ties to one another. While these groups share certain objectives – prominent among which is the implementation of the shari`a and a rigorous enforcement of lifestyles consistent with their rigid understanding of Islamic morality – there is no firm evidence of close coordination among them – though the possibility of such collaboration should not be discounted and is a critical question that field-based research should aim to answer. Those linkages that are known are predominantly of a personal nature: militants affiliated with a given group often have personal connections to others active in different towns or cities. In some instances, these connections go back to shared experiences in Afghanistan, Iraq or the Afghan-Pakistani border.

To assess properly the operational environment of radical Salafi groups, one must bear in mind that their militants sometimes have personal relationships, longstanding or more recent, to members or even leaders of revolutionary brigades that are not necessarily dominated by Salafi or Islamist elements. For that matter, Salafis, even those with violent proclivities, may be connected to individuals in governmental or quasi-governmental bodies, such as military councils, the police, and the "auxiliary forces" (the Supreme Security Committees and the Libyan Shield Forces) that were created in 2012 to provide for security via the integration of revolutionary brigades into nominally state-dependent security institutions.[16] Members of those institutions occasionally may share some of the views of violent Salafis, or, at the very least, they may be unwilling to confront them. There is some evidence to suggest, for instance, that individuals who at some point were at least loosely affiliated with the radical Salafi group Ansar al-Shari`a (see below) joined the Libyan Shield Forces (LSF) when it was formed and officially placed under the authority of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). Hence, for instance, reports to the effect that on several occasions when violent Salafis targeted Sufi shrines in broad daylight in 2012 (as they did in Tripoli, Benghazi and Zliten), security forces either looked on or deliberately withdrew, allowing the attacks to proceed.

Violent Salafis, therefore, have benefited from a degree of complicity and impunity from the very institutions that are supposed to rein them in. That situation, in turn, has reflected the presence, within the institutions in question, of individuals who share some of the views of violent Salafis, or are connected to them through family ties or other personal connections. It also frequently has stemmed from a reluctance to bear the costs associated with curbing VE activity when the benefits associated with such behavior are not always clear to those who would have to engage in it.

Within Libya's violent Salafi nebula, a few groups stand out. One of them is the *Imprisoned Omar Abdel Rahman Brigades* (IOARB),[17] which claimed responsibility for a spate of attacks on Western and international targets in May-June 2012 in Benghazi: the rocket-propelled grenade strike at the office of the ICRC on May

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[16] On this process, see ICG, "Divided We Stand," pp. 10-20 and Daragahi, "Shadow army takes over Libya's security."
[17] The group is named after Egyptian preacher Omar Abd al-Rahman ("the blind sheikh"), who is serving a life sentence in the United States for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. During the 1970s, Abd al-Rahman was tied to the two most significant jihadi groups at the time in Egypt: *Islamic Jihad*, which assassinated Sadat, and the *al-Gama`a al-Islamiyya* organization, of which he came to be viewed as the leader, and that was responsible in particular for the November 1997 Luxor massacre in which 58 foreign tourists and 4 Egyptians were killed.

22; the detonation of an explosive device outside the gates of the U.S. consulate on June 5; and the attack on the car carrying the British Ambassador on June 10. Members of the IOARB also may have been involved in the June 12 attack on the offices of the ICRC in Misrata and the September 11, 2012 assault on the U.S. Mission in Benghazi.

Ansar al-Shari`a (AaS) – or, rather, the two organizationally separate AaS brigades in, respectively, Darnah and Benghazi – represents the better-known component of the radical Salafi movement in Libya.[18] In the world of radical Salafi organizations, AaS stands out by its readiness and ability to provide social services, and by evidence of the support it may derive from that feature. Standard jihadi (or *takfiri*) organizations typically do not provide services; the support they generate is rooted in other factors -- first and foremost the resonance of their ideology among youth thoroughly alienated from the prevailing political, social and economic order. In sharp contrast, AaS is reported to derive significant grassroots support from the services it delivers in such varied areas as fixing roads, picking up trash, providing for security at one key hospital in Benghazi, and offering limited monetary assistance to poor families.[19] The organization has endeavored to sustain and broaden its base support, and to rally more Libyans behind its objective of creating a shari`a-based state, by demonstrating that it cares for people and that it strives to help them overcome the obstacles they face in their daily life. In that regard, its modus operandi deviates sharply from the totally violence-centric model that characterizes jihadi organizations that operate underground and make no effort to insert themselves into the mainstream of public life. Instead, the model followed by AaS is reminiscent of Islamist organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood, all of which (though in very different ways and in order to serve different objectives) rely heavily on social service provision to allow the other components of their message and agenda gain traction with as broad a portion of the public as possible. Along similar lines, notwithstanding its ideological affinities with AQ and any ties it may have to AQIM, AaS pursues a local agenda. There is no evidence that the organization is seeking to extend its reach beyond Libya, though it also is clear that various groups calling themselves Ansar al-Sharia (in Tunisia, Libya and Yemen in particular) are aware of each other's existence, share clear ideological affinities, are engaged in similar outreach programs aimed at winning over local populations, and are being encouraged by transnational VE ideologues to develop closer ties to each other and/or to AQ or AQIM.[20]

B. Tribal and Ethnic Violence

Violent inter-ethnic and tribal clashes have been a recurrent feature of post-Qaddafi's Libya. As measured by the number of casualties, such communal violence has been the deadliest source of conflict since the regime officially fell in October 2011. In 2012 alone, hundreds were killed, and hundreds more wounded, in inter-communal fighting in the south. The main flashpoints have included the towns of Kufrah in the southeast, Sabha in the southwest, Ghadamis in the northwest (near Libya's border with Tunisia and Algeria), and Bani Walid near the coast (see Map).   That being said, the scope of the problem should not be overstated since it affects only a relatively small percentage of the country's population that lives in geographically peripheral and/or remote areas.

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[18] These two entities are believed to operate largely independently from one another. Some reports suggest that the Darnah-based group is led by Abu Sufyan bin Qumu, whose association with Ben Laden goes back to the latter's presence in the Sudan from 1992 to 1996. Other analysts argue that bin Qumu is not the leader at this time, and that he is primarily involved in drug trafficking and other illicit activities. Bin Qumu joined the Taliban in 1998. Following his capture after 9/11, he was detained at Guantanamo before being transferred to Libya in September 2007. He was released from the Abu Salim prison in 2010 under the amnesty plan discussed above, and emerged as a brigade commander in Darnah shortly after the popular upheaval against Qaddafi broke out. In April 2012, he played a leading role in the establishment of the Darnah-based AaS group, which was created after some of the more radical members of the Abu Salim Martyr's Brigade (ASMB) in Darnah refused to abide by the decision to assign the ASMB to the newly created SSCs, placed under the authority of the MOI. Members of both the Darnah-based and Benghazi AaS brigades are believed to have played a key role in the assault on the US Mission in Benghazi. See Wehrey, pp. 10-12.

[19] Zelin, Aaron Y. "Maqdisi's Disciples in Libya and Tunisia."

[20] Recently, Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia held a blood drive for Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi's health clinic.

Drivers of Communal Violence: An Overview

The communal clashes of the past twenty months have stemmed from the confluence of factors of a very different nature.[21] Some reach deep into Libya's past; others are legacies of the Qaddafi era, while others, still, reflect dynamics associated with the recent popular upheaval and its aftermath. Some are tied to tribal or ethnic rivalries that have a significant "primordial" component, while others reflect "manufactured conflict" and the tensions created by political maneuvering. At one level, communal clashes typically are triggered or sustained by competition over power and resources, as well as by the unaddressed, longstanding grievances of groups that have long been discriminated against (or perceive themselves to have been the victim of past and present injustices). At another level, these clashes reflect entrenched identity divisions. And while communal clashes stem primarily from domestic factors, the grievances, fears and charges that members of different communities often level against one another are fueled as well by cross-border movements of people associated with different communities (for instance the Tabu, spread across southern Libya and northern Chad, or the Tuareg, found in Libya, Mali and Niger).

Indeed, it is hard if not impossible to disentangle all the dimensions identified above. For instance, the fears, suspicion and sense of vulnerability that underlie the "identity-based" component of communal clashes are inextricably associated with past discriminatory or divide-and-rule policies, the readiness of political actors to exploit communal rivalries for political advantage, competition over smuggling and trafficking opportunities, as well as cross-border movements of people. Hovering over all those factors -- and compounding or making possible their destabilizing impacts – is the overarching security vacuum, the broader failure of various governments since October 2011 to establish lasting popular support and make authoritative decisions that can be enforced, and grave governance gaps at both the national and local levels.

While the above discussion provides the general backdrop against which the drivers of communal conflict should be analyzed, some of these drivers deserve some elaboration, which is provided below.

Identity-based/primordial divisions are especially relevant to the conflict between dark-skinned, African Tabu and the Arab Zway tribe in the town of Kufra and the broader southeastern region. They come into play as well in other southern towns and oases where Tabu can be found (as further west in Umm al-Aranib) and with regard to periodic clashes between Arab-Berber and Tuareg tribes (as in the areas along Libya's borders with Algeria and Niger).

As noted above, these "identity conflicts" are rarely about identity *per se*; instead, they typically reflect grievances related to socioeconomic marginalization and unequal access to the benefits of citizenship. The issues of who can be considered a Libyan and/or a "true native" of the area, and which community is seeking to evict which others from its homeland, often generate great fears and feed into communal violence. The movement of people associated with communities that span across the border of several countries, such as the Tabu or the Tuareg, also contributes to this phenomenon. Thus, for instance, the Tabu, whose existence in southern Libya actually predates the Arab presence, are often perceived and labeled (explicitly or implicitly) as "foreign" by local Arab tribes. It did not help them, in that regard, that they did not fit nicely with the Qaddafi regime's pan-Arab ideology. Meanwhile, the crossing into southern Libya of large numbers of Tabu from Chad, and their settling in towns such as Kufra and Umm al-Aranib, has generated resentment among local Arab inhabitants.[22] For their part, since the fall of the Qaddafi regime in particular, Tabu activists have accused members of southern Arab tribes, the Zway in the east and Awlad Sulayman further west, of seeking

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[21] The discussion in this section draws in particular on Wehrey, "The Struggle for Security in Eastern Libya," pp. 14-17; McGregor, "Tribes and Terrorists;" and ICG, "Divided We Stand," pp. 5-7.

[22] It should be noted that many of these "Chadian Tabu" do have previous Libyan identity cards. They argue that they were resettled in the narrow "Aozou Strip" by Qaddafi after Libya seized that territory, claimed by Chad, in 1973 and annexed it in 1975. In 1988, Libya and Chad agreed to settle their dispute over Aozou peacefully, and in 1990 they submitted the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague. In 1994, the ICJ ruled against Libya, and since then the strip has been recognized as Chadian territory (it forms the northernmost portion of the country along the border with Libya). A reliable breakdown of the Tabu population according to actual place of origin is not available.

to evict Tabu so as to create new demographic realities in the south before the transition to a new system is completed.[23] Tensions between Arab-Berber and Tuareg tribes in the southwestern part of the country sometimes betray similar dynamics.

Communal clashes in the past eighteen months also have reflected *legacies of the Qaddafi era.* Especially relevant, in this regard, were the former dictator's divide-and-rule tactics (which included the systematic pitting of communities against one another), his deliberate favoring of particular tribes (such as the Qadhadhfa) at the expense of others, and his neglect or even deliberate marginalization of certain tribes and ethnic groups, such as the Tabu. Tabu have long felt disenfranchised and discriminated against, due in part to the perception of them as "foreign," and, in part as well, because under Qaddafi they openly had opposed the regime's Arabization program. That opposition had prompted the government to revoke the citizenship of many Tabu, and to suspend related benefits. In 2007, the Tabu Front for the Salvation of Libya (TFSL) was established with the explicit objective of combating the regime on behalf of the disenfranchised Tabu community. While it was forced to operate from overseas (it was based in Oslo), the TFSL was an irritant to the regime. And when the uprising against Qaddafi began, Tabu were quick to join it, viewing it as a golden opportunity to bring down a regime that had disenfranchised them, and trying to take advantage of it to improve their status in a new Libya (including by seizing control of very profitable smuggling routes). Conversely, the determination of Arab tribes once favored by Qaddafi (such as the Zway) to resist efforts by Tabu to assert themselves in the new order has been an important driver behind recent communal clashes in Kufra and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, in Sabha and the oasis around it, tribal clashes between the Qadhadhfa and the Awlad Sulayman have been fueled by the privileged treatment the Qadhadhfa had received under Qaddafi, and by the Awlad Sulayman's early involvement in the uprising against his regime. Finally, further west in particular, friction between Tuareg and Arab-Berber tribes has reflected, in part, the anti-Tuareg sentiment created by Qaddafi's longstanding outreach to Tuareg communities in Mali and Niger (which entailed allowing many of them to settle in Libya), and by his policy of recruiting large numbers of Tuareg in the armed forces, especially in the aftermath of the Tuareg rebellion in Mali during the 1990s. The regime's recruitment of many more Tuareg as mercenaries in 2011 exacerbated resentment toward members of that community.

Qaddafi-era policies, in short, often exacerbated older rivalries and sources of inter-communal suspicion and grievances, while creating new inequities across ethnic groups and tribes. They made many communities even more inherently distrustful of one another, and added to the pervasive distrust of a central government that historically has failed to behave as an impartial referee in community-based disputes.

Dynamics associated with the upheaval and its turbulent aftermath also have contributed to recent communal conflicts. Tribes (e.g., the Qadhadhfa), ethnic groups, and communities (e.g., in Bani Walid) that during the uprising fought with the regime, or that are widely perceived to be dominated by former "loyalists," have been targeted by revolutionary brigades. To protect themselves, they often have created their own militias. In Sabha, for instance, armed clashes between the Qadhadhfa and the Awlad Sulayman have been recurrent since 2012.[24]

In the south especially, but also in and around Ghadamis on Libya's border with Tunisia and Algeria, the uprising's aftermath also saw an intensification of competition over lucrative cross-border trafficking in weapons, goods, and people. Because contests over smuggling opportunities often pit different communities against one another, they can take the form of "tribal" or "ethnic" clashes that, in reality, are sustained by struggles over economic resources. As noted earlier, for instance, Tabu tribesmen in the Kufra region have been able to gain control over very profitable trafficking and smuggling networks by taking advantage of the security vacuum and of the weakening of Arab tribal elements once close to the Qaddafi regime.

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[23] See in particular McGregor, "Tribes and Terrorists."

[24] From December 28, 2012 through January 2, 2013, six consecutive days of armed clashes between the two tribes resulted in several dead and many more wounded in that town. See McGregor, "Tribes and Terrorists."

Persistent neglect of some communities, together with unresolved grievances associated with Qaddafi-era discriminatory policies, also feed resentment toward the state and constituencies viewed as favored by it. That is particularly true with regard to the Tabu, whose citizenship status remains unresolved, and who do not believe that the political will exists in Tripoli to put an end to their precarious status in the country.

Meanwhile, any decision by the central government that could impact the distribution of resources and power at the local level, or any significant political or economic shift at that level, generate intense reactions and counter-reactions by affected groups. Some communities (for instance the Tabu) fear that others are bent on their marginalization, disenfranchisement, or even eviction from the area. And here again, perceptions – and the sense of vulnerability and hostilities they generate –often are more critical than actual policies and developments. The recently passed local government law, the implementation of which may begin shortly, could help address these problems.

Since late 2011, the central government's inability to provide for law and order, mediate disputes, enforce related settlements, control borders, and curb various forms of trafficking has allowed conflicts to fester and escalate into violent confrontations. Interim governments in Tripoli often have deployed tactics that have exacerbated the situation on the ground. For instance, the subcontracting of security and mediation to actors – revolutionary brigades or tribal elders – that are neither neutral nor viewed as such, has not merely failed to curb violence – but it often has inserted additional sources of conflict in an already volatile environments. This process has been particularly visible in Kufra, for instance, where in mid-2012 the government decided to deploy the newly created Libya Shield Forces (LSF) to put an end to recurrent armed clashes between the Tabu and the Arab Zway tribe. The Tabu, however, do not perceive the LSF to be a neutral force, and with good reasons; they have pointed to the LSF siding with the Zway, and have called instead for the regular armed forces to be brought in to ensure security in the region.[25]

Interim governments since October 2011 also have been viewed as inattentive to, or too slow in addressing, the legitimate grievances associated with the discriminatory policies of the past. On other occasions, they have sought (or have been perceived as seeking) to exact revenge on communities once favored by the Qaddafi regime by favoring their historical rivals. In Kufra, for instance, Zway Arab tribes have complained about the government having granted responsibility for the monitoring of borders to the Tabu, thus allowing the latter to gain control over the lucrative economic opportunities associated with cross-border trafficking. Developments of this sort predictably has generated resistance from those who see themselves on the losing end of the new arrangements and emerging political economy; violent clashes often have not been far behind.

PART TWO: VE RISKS AND SCENARIOS

For the purposes of this assessment in particular, it is critical to differentiate between political violence in general and VE/I specifically. USAID defines Violent Extremism as "ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic and political objectives" and insurgency as "a political and territorial struggle" that relies on "the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region."[26]

As Part One established, many recent and on-going expressions of political violence in Libya lack a clear ideological agenda, and thus cannot be considered manifestations of VE. Such forms of violence have included communal clashes, efforts to disrupt elections, and, more recently, the strategic use of armed protests to paralyze certain ministries or force the passage of particular pieces of legislation (e.g., the political isolation law). Meanwhile, recurrent armed confrontations in specific areas of the country hardly fit the definition of "insurgency" since they do not appear to be conceptualized by the actors involved in them as

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[25] See Wehrey, "The Struggle for Security in Eastern Libya" and McGregor, "Tribes and Terrorists."
[26] "The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency – USAID Policy," p. 2.

parts of a campaign to "seize, nullify or challenge political control of a region," or as tactics in a broader "political and territorial struggle." For its part, cross-border smuggling and trafficking lacks both the territorial dimension of insurgency and the ideological component of VE. *A VE/I risk assessment, however, should not disregard trends that do not fall under a strict VE/I definition – from inter-ethnic and tribal clashes to violence generated or sustained by competition over illicit economic opportunities and/or by (real or perceived) regional disparities or group discrimination. Instead, from such an assessment's perspective, the central question becomes: under which conditions may these phenomena morph into, or compound existing sources of, VE?* The analysis that follows includes such a reflection, but begins with recapitulation of the main drivers behind recent manifestations of political violence in Libya.

A. Current VE Risk and Drivers

The single most important driver of the current VE/I threat – and the variable most liable to cause a significant escalation in that threat – is ***the tenuous state of security in the country***. This security vacuum is, in part, a legacy of the protracted fight to overthrow the regime. That struggle brought about the disintegration of the personalistic security institutions Qaddafi had established; it led to a proliferation of revolutionary brigades (and coalitions thereof); and, more generally, it created space for violent organizations, other armed groups, criminal networks, and illicit activities. Security deficits are compounded by strong regional and local identities and solidarities made even more salient by the uprising and its aftermath, as well as by the reluctance of communities empowered by the upheaval to submit to a central government that has failed to assert its authority and create legitimacy for itself. Those factors, as well as the lack of economic opportunities for the youth manning revolutionary brigades, have made disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) – never an easy process in the first place – an even more challenging task in the Libyan case.

The GOL's approach to security challenges in the past year frequently has exacerbated existing communal tensions while doing little to reduce the VE risk. The creation of auxiliary forces such as the SRF, the SSCs and the LSF that operate side with side with the regular police and army, but wield far more power and influence than those institutions, has proven to be particularly problematic. First, it has amounted to the establishment of quasi-state institutions staffed by individuals whose loyalty is to their respective brigades and brigades' commanders, not to the state *per se*. That is especially true since in many instances entire brigades were integrated into those auxiliary forces in one fell swoop. That approach undercuts the effectiveness of the state, its ability to act independently of particularistic interests, and its credibility as a truly national, impartial institution. Second, many of those who have found their way into these forces share affinities with, and/or have some sort of personal connection to, members of the radical Salafi organizations they are supposed to contain. Third, as discussed in the section on communal conflicts, because they are not viewed as neutral referees but as partial to some interests, these forces' ability to mediate inter-tribal or inter-ethnic disputes is severely constrained. As a result, the state of security in the country has remained extremely fragile, which, in turn, has fed into two security-related dilemmas.

> **a.** As long as the state lacks in legitimacy, credibility and enforcement capacity, groups will choose to remain armed, since they do not trust the government's ability to protect them and their community, and since (as an expression of the state's legitimacy deficit) they do not feel that complying with the government's directives is the right and proper thing for them to do. However, as long as armed groups that lie beyond state control continue to operate, security conditions will not improve, and the state will remain weak. Put differently, while the security vacuum encourages groups to retain their weapons and resist real (as opposed to pro-forma) submission to the authority of impartial state institutions, the failure to disarm brigades, militias and other armed groups perpetuates the security vacuum.

> **b.** The integration of revolutionary brigades into nominally state-dependent entities initially was conceived as a necessary, transitional step that reflected the actual balance of power between nascent, weak state institutions and revolutionary structures that enjoyed far more popular support and a

greater ability to make decisions stick. The hope was that over time those *thuwwar* tied to the state-building process in this manner would develop a new set of institutional interests that would tighten their loyalty to the state. And that may well happen. *An equally likely scenario, however, may be that the insertion into nascent state institutions of individuals whose real loyalty lies not in the state but in organizations that represent and advance other interests (personal agendas as well as regional or local solidarities) will end up subverting the very state-building process to which it is supposed to contribute.*

Side by side with security deficits – and, as discussed further below, the broader crisis of nation-wide governance that these deficits both reflect and exacerbate – three other drivers deserve emphasis.

> **a.** The first consists of *Qaddafi-era legacies of divide-and-rule policies and socioeconomic neglect of, or discrimination against, certain communities* (particularly non-Arab, African/darker-skin populations in the south) *and regions* (especially the east). Due to those legacies, many Libyans remain extremely distrustful of the central government and its officials. They believe that senior decision-makers in the capital remain at best uninterested in the needs of their respective communities and regions, or, worse, bent on their continued marginalization. And they watch with apprehension as rival communities maneuver to position themselves advantageously in the post-Qaddafi order. These perceptions and fears may take years to subside – though a few wise decisions by the central government and reciprocal goodwill gestures by various communities could go a long way toward building trust. The VE/I risk is heightened by the confluence of factors examined earlier: rivalries that reach deep into Libya's past, conflicts manufactured or exacerbated by Qaddafi's ruling strategies, and competition over power and resources. All in all, the main danger, here, lies in the following scenario: a protracted inability by the central government to create legitimacy for itself and assert its authority against a backdrop of communal tensions that steadily escalate into armed confrontations. Such developments would create opportunities for VE groups, including AQIM cells operating across Libya's borders, to insert themselves in local conflicts, taking advantage of government weakness and of a broader crisis of national, regional and local governance inside Libya.

> **b.** *The prevalence of illicit activities, especially cross-border smuggling of weapons, drugs and persons, also contributes to the VE/I risk* and does so in ways that are clearly related to the discussion above. Libya's southern regions (southeast and southwest alike) are particularly affected by this phenomenon, but Libya's northwestern border with Tunisia certainly is not immune to it. Contests over the significant economic resources that can be generated through illicit activities typically have strong communal connotations in Libya, since the maneuvering they involve typically pit communities against one another. And while this phenomenon is not new, it has taken on new twists and turns since the popular upheaval, which also has changed the distribution of winners and losers under it.

> **c.** *A brewing, low-intensity Islamist insurgency across the region, fueled in part by the blowback effects of the French intervention in Mali, has added another layer to Libya's VE/I risk.* As the Introduction discussed, jihadists pushed out of Mali have made their way to southern Libya, and some even may have been able to connect to pre-existing radical Salafi groups in Benghazi or Darnah. There is a real danger that unless the security situation in southern and eastern Libya improves, regional unrest and Libya's internal crisis of governance could feed into each other in such a way as to create a downward spiral of instability and violence for the country and its surrounding region.

The drivers highlighted above – Libya's internal security gaps, its legacies of communal antagonisms rooted, in part, in discriminatory state policies and socioeconomic marginalization, the contests over illicit activities among strategically located actors, and an increasingly turbulent regional environment – are inter-related and feed into one another in ways that sustain the potential for VE and insurgency.

> **a.** Security gaps create a permissive environment for illicit activities, for operations by radical Salafi groups, as well as for violent communal clashes triggered by real or perceived discrimination and

marginalization. They also make Libya (especially southern Libya) an attractive destination for regional jihadists.

b. Historically marginalized communities empowered by the popular upheaval are pressing their demands for a redress of past and/or present injustices in ways that often compound security deficits.

c. Meanwhile, in the south in particular, violent communal clashes frequently are driven, in part, by competition over smuggling routes and networks. The latter, in turn, can be used as well to facilitate cross-border movement by jihadists from Mali, Chad, Niger, and Libya.

Beyond the factors above, Libya's dire security challenges, and its real vulnerability to a potential escalation of the VE/I risk, betray *a broader crisis of nation-wide governance*. They reflect the inability of central government institutions to reassure populations that the state actually can be trusted to govern and that, specifically, it can discharge the following functions:

- deliver stability and security;
- manage the country's considerable natural-resources wealth in a way that the population at large perceives to be honest, effective and equitable;
- design and implement policies;
- resolve local disputes through agreements viewed as legitimate and that can be enforced and sustained over time;
- control borders and project power across the national territory; and
- create the regulatory and institutional environment that will facilitate the rebuilding of infrastructure and encourage domestic and foreign private investment.

In the past few months, chronic factionalism and infighting within the new elite combined with political missteps by foreign-educated technocrats who frequently have spent far more years abroad than in Libya have contributed to the security and governability gaps that have been in evidence since the country officially was "liberated" (from Qaddafi's regime) in October 2011. That being said, in light of the bleak situation Qaddafi bequeathed his people, it is possible to take a more positive view: the fact that things have held together the way they have is an indication of relative success, and a source of cautious optimism that Libya may yet find a way out of the predicaments it currently faces.

B. Looking Ahead: Outstanding VE Threats

Contained as it presently is, the VE/I risk could escalate sharply in the event of a further deterioration in security conditions and/or in other key aspects of nation-wide governance. Trends that would facilitate such a development include further disarray, political infighting and policy paralysis at the center of the political system, leaving that center unable to engage in security sector reform, carry out other basic governance tasks, and build legitimacy for itself. Under those conditions, security deficits likely would worsen and provide yet more space for VE groups. The continued inability of the state to monitor borders would create opportunities for increased linkages between local and regional or transnational VE organizations, as well as for cooperation between criminal networks linked to smuggling and trafficking and more ideologically oriented groups. A gridlocked political center unable to assert its authority toward an increasingly restless and disgruntled periphery might prompt more frequent and deadlier inter-tribal and inter-ethnic clashes, which, in turn, would feed into the dysfunctions above.

Thus far, there has been no firm evidence of transnational VE organizations (especially AQIM) successfully inserting themselves in Libya's communal conflicts, including those that have resulted in deadly clashes in Kufra and Sabha. However, that could change in the event of a further weakening of security conditions, increased lawlessness in the south and/or the east, an intensified crisis of national governance, and/or

growing political polarization. Debilitating political battles and policy paralysis in the capital would accentuate the lack of confidence in the state and in the fate of Libya's transition, especially among those ethnic groups and communities that already perceive themselves to be victims of systemic marginalization and discrimination. The central government's inability to address the main drivers behind communal violence, and the festering of the grievances and broader conditions which fuel that violence, would create incentives for regional or transnational VE organizations to seek to co-opt the conflicts that have pitted tribes and ethnic groups against each other. That should be of particular concern in light of the rapidly worsening regional situation described earlier.

Similar conclusions apply to the federalism issue. Thus far, as discussed earlier, the violence associated with the federalist movement has been limited in scope and impact (it took the form, in particular, of efforts to disrupt the July 7, 2012 elections), and it has not expressed itself through behavior that matches the definition of "violent extremism" or "insurgency." Nonetheless, a prolonged failure to address the root causes of structural discontent in the east could prompt a surge of activity by pro-autonomy armed groups and/or play into the hands of the radical Salafi organizations that operate in the area. That scenario would become even more likely if an inability to satisfy key grievances in the east were to combine with a broader national-level crisis of governance.

PART THREE: PROGRAMMATIC IMPLICATIONS

Limited as they may be in their reach and operational capacities, radical Salafi groups present a security threat and sap Libya's ability to develop a legitimate and effective political order. Unless meaningful progress takes place toward building such an order in the next few years, the security vacuum and the accompanying VE/I risk are likely to increase steadily, particularly in light of the proliferation of weapons in the country and the sources of instability around it. The same logic applies to recurrent inter-tribal and inter-ethnic clashes, which both reflect state weakness and undercut Libya's institutional and democratic development. CVE and DRG programming, therefore, are difficult to disentangle, particularly in their governance/state-building dimensions.

This document also has established that the roots of the VE/I risk in Libya *are largely indigenous*, even though dynamics that originate in the broader region feed into the danger and could compound it markedly and rapidly. Because at this stage internal risk factors remain the most salient ones, Libya-specific responses are not only appropriate, but *they hold the key to reducing the threat*.

A. Addressing the VE Risk

As Parts One and Two demonstrated, radical Salafi groups represent the most immediate and significant risk from a VE perspective, and the primary driver behind that threat consists of the country's security gaps. Structural and sustainable improvements in security will necessitate institutionalizing and professionalizing the army, the police, and the judicial system. All these are areas in which USAID and the USG more generally are active, and the analysis in this report underscored the relevance of such SSR, DDR and RoL programming. To establish their authority, governmental institutions will need to operate as true arms of the state as opposed to mere instruments through which particularistic interests seek to sustain and expand their influence. Such an objective calls for dynamic and highly targeted transition-oriented programming – especially in as complex and fluid a political landscape, and as daunting a program implementation environment, as Libya's.

As this document highlighted, security deficits also are, to some extent at least, by-products of a broader crisis of governance. That crisis may be particularly visible and consequential at the national level, but it is conspicuous at the local level as well. Consequently, interventions that aim to enhance the quality of governance can help mitigate the VE threat. While they may not address directly the "first-order driver"

(security), they can help nurture the broader environment that will enable security sector reform. Moreover, as Part One discussed, radical Salafi groups such as AaS deliberately seek to expand their appeal by providing vital services. Consequently, improving the quality of local governance, and in particular filling in the serious gaps that exist in service delivery at the local level (especially in and near those enclaves in the east where violent Salafi groups have been able to develop traction) constitute appropriate "second-order driver" responses to the challenge posed by those groups.

It also may be worth exploring the extent to which development assistance has any productive role to play in supporting the various "antibodies" that Libyan society has generated, or activated, to protect itself against the disease of radical Salafi violence. As Part One noted, even in those areas where they have a strong presence and particularly disruptive impact, radical Salafis have encountered stiff resistance from across the entire spectrum of Libyan social actors and organizations. Local counterweights to violent Salafis include clerics (including the Grand Mufti) and Salafis who have taken public stances against violence, the Muslim Brethren to some extent, tribal elders, and (probably with a much lesser degree of effectiveness) NGOs in Benghazi and Darnah. Even in Darnah, which is occasionally and simplistically reduced to "a hotbed of radical Salafi and Islamist currents," violent Salafis have faced organized counter-mobilization, and their activities have generated considerable public outrage. There is much in Libyan culture and social mores that makes it difficult for violent Salafis to gain lasting traction and broaden their base. Whether there is a role for development assistance in assisting in the local pushback against VE deserves consideration.[27]

As Part Two suggested, the most likely scenario under which VE groups could gain more traction would entail a further erosion in nation-wide governance, caused or accompanied by growing political polarization, wrangling and jockeying for political or personal advantage among key leaders, and resulting in institutional paralysis and policy gridlock. Political disarray would thwart security-sector reform, impede decision-making in general, and compound existing security deficits (including by providing disincentives for armed groups to relinquish their weapons to a state unable to guarantee order and personal safety). An intensified crisis of governance also would provide opportunities for radical groups to broaden their appeal by filling in related gaps in the delivery of basic public services, and by taking advantage of chaos and lawlessness to lash out at their various enemies.

The kind of crisis suggested above could be triggered by an inability to overcome fundamental disagreements regarding the system of governance that the country should adopt. Strengthening the capacity of ministries and representative bodies to craft and enforce compromises on those issues is essential, and foreign assistance can make an important contribution to that process. The debate over the constitution will be particularly critical in this regard. Libya's main political forces and actors will need to reach a compromise on such key, overlapping issues as:

- The nature of the political system (parliamentary, presidential, or semi-presidential).
- The choice of a federal or unitary state, and the exact modalities for the representation of local and regional interests in national-level institutions.
- The specific divisions of responsibilities between the western, eastern and central regions; among key cities (between Tripoli and Benghazi of course, but, increasingly as well, among cities in the east); and between the central government, regional administrations (governorates) and local authorities (municipalities).
- The scope and modalities of decentralization (especially if a unitary system is adopted).

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[27] While we should remain mindful of the danger that indigenous sources of resistance to VE could be discredited by foreign assistance, the risk in Libya does not appear to be particularly high at the moment. Instead, it is the lack of such assistance that currently appears to be creating frustration at the grassroots level. The general population seems eager for foreign support in confronting the VE threat. If such support is not forthcoming, anger could mount at the international community and the GOL. Carefully planned and implemented programming could play a role in bolstering government legitimacy.

- How to balance the commitment to creating legitimate and authoritative national-level governing institutions against widespread aspirations for an extensive degree of local autonomy.
- How the above choices should be reflected in the nature of the systems selected for national, local and regional elections.
- The role of religion in public life and of religious principles in legislation and the broader governance system.
- The mechanisms that should be put in place to ensure an effective and transparent management of the country's natural resources as well as an equitable distribution of their proceeds among the various regions and in the population at large.

These issues cannot be resolved in a way that fully satisfies all the political interests involved. Reciprocal concessions and difficult compromises will need to materialize. Unfortunately, at this stage it remains unclear that the main political forces and actors are up to that task. Political interests that have embraced strong positions on any of these issues – for instance, extensive administrative and financial autonomy for the eastern region, or an explicit Islamic referent in politics and governmental affairs – may not be willing to live with the kind of compromises suggested above. And while they do not always enjoy a broad base of support, they often are well organized and determined. Some of them enjoy continued though dwindling revolutionary legitimacy, provide social services, are involved in existing security arrangements, and/or have been able to gain a foothold in nascent state institutions. As a result, they are in a position to play the role of spoilers.

If a broad-based and sustainable consensus on the issues above is not reached, further political erosion will take place that could magnify the country's vulnerability to VE and destabilization. From a programmatic perspective, therefore, the question that needs to be explored is the extent to which development assistance has a meaningful role to play in facilitating the political bargains that are called for, and in helping bridge the gaps among the relevant players. Whether or not the compromises suggested above can be hammered out lies primarily in the hands of Libyan actors themselves, but donors certainly can focus on those areas of consensus building where development assistance can make the greatest contribution. Under any scenarios, the contribution of assistance to reducing the risk of VE will be indirect, which in this instance certainly does not mean inconsequential. The logic behind it will be to facilitate the political settlements and improvements in governance that are needed to limit Libya's vulnerability to both VE per se and other forms of violent conflicts liable to be harnessed by VE organizations.

B. Addressing VE Risks Associated with Ethnic and Tribal Violence

Were they to become endemic or even escalate, the violent clashes that have pitted ethnic and tribal groups against one another, particularly in the south, have the potential to enhance the VE/I risk, both directly and indirectly. They may do so in one or several of the following ways:

- By feeding into the lawlessness and chaos that VE organizations can exploit;
- By being co-opted by those organizations;
- By sapping even further confidence in the state in general, and in its ability to regulate social and political disputes in particular; and/or
- By intensifying the cross-border smuggling and trafficking in ways liable to overwhelm already limited state capacities and create ideological affinities and/or tactical complicities between those involved in that trafficking and violent extremists.

The analysis conducted in Parts One and Two has shown that the drivers behind communal violence are multi-dimensional, overlapping and often mutually reinforcing. They are rooted in the distant past, in more recent developments, as well as in on-going dynamics. They reflect strong identity differences, but also bitter

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contests over resources and power. They are shaped by the grievances that past discriminatory policies have produced, and by the anger at the lack of progress toward redressing those historical inequities, but they also are fueled by new injustices condoned or actively perpetrated by government officials. Sources of conflict sometimes are intensified by the state – most often inadvertently, but sometimes deliberately. Suspicion of the new government's motives and intentions are sometimes unjustified – but not always so.

The conclusions above underscore the difficulties inherent in trying to address the drivers behind communal violence. The multiplicity of actors, logics and variables and the fluid nature of the social and political terrain create substantial hurdles for programming. However, the south also features some of the places in which donors can more safely and easily function. Moreover, given the longstanding neglect of, and poverty that prevails in, those areas, even limited assistance may have a consequential impact. The new local government law, which may be put into implementation shortly, contains elements that could be leveraged to tackle underlying drivers of violence in a far more systematic and sustainable manner than is the case under the current crisis response mechanism. In the meantime, programming by USIP and OTI in the area of conflict mitigation and management could play a helpful role.

That being said, as long as assistance providers remain mindful of the complexities and pitfalls highlighted above, targeted efforts to address key drivers of communal violence may be useful. Partnering with other donors may be particularly relevant given limited USAID funding and the unusually difficult implementation environment. Drivers that should receive particular attention are those that, if left unaddressed, could facilitate the morphing of communal violence into VE, or might help that violence feed into an environment that, in turn, will increase the VE/I risk. Because improved security remains the single most important piece of that puzzle, governance-related interventions that contribute to that objective should receive particular attention. Other activities to consider include those that may help:

> a) Overcome the legacies of social and economic neglect of some communities (including through the provision of basic services and infrastructure);
>
> b) (Re)shape local governance systems in such a way as to make them more inclusive of hitherto excluded groups;
>
> c) Correct past discriminatory policies and prevent new forms of systematic discrimination against some communities; and
>
> d) Address sources of regional or community-based disaffection rooted, at least in part, in factors that are amenable to development assistance.

C. Concluding Comments

Development assistance has a substantial role to play in addressing some of the key forces and dynamics that sustain the VE risk in Libya. In particular, it can help tackle the significant gaps that exist in two key, related areas: governance dysfunctions at both the national and local levels, and the under-developed and inadequate relationship between national-level and local-level governance. These two areas should be prioritized in VE/I programming, and they are critical as well to the broader objective of creating a viable, democratic order in Libya. The types of interventions suggested here include:

> a) Responding to GOL requests for technical assistance during the constitution-drafting process or the elaboration of the electoral law. Relevant interventions should include the facilitation of broad buy-in by the population. Rallying a critical mass of key Libyan stakeholders behind a shared vision for the country and a roadmap for achieving that vision should be a core objective of donors. It is a process to which donors can make indirect but substantive contributions.

b) Exposing Libyan decision-makers to various models of decentralized governance, and/or contributing to an informed national debate on such models.

c) Responding to ad hoc requests regarding the respective merits and dangers of adopting one such model over another.

d) Familiarizing Libyan audiences with relevant foreign experiences related to the proper balancing of national and local authorities.

e) Providing advice and targeted assistance on how to connect more effectively national-level governance institutions to local- and regional-level ones.

f) Support for institutions and mechanisms designed to facilitate an effective and transparent management of the country's natural resources, as well as an equitable distribution of attendant wealth across Libya's various regions and in the population at large.

g) Being positioned to respond to demands for advice, analysis and information on various models of, and issues associated with, security-sector reform.

h) Supporting the development of a cadre of public administrators and/or of "islands of competence" within the bureaucracy – especially where the impact on the delivery of basic public services is likely to be greater – so as to generate much-needed momentum toward greater public confidence in state institutions and those who staff them.

i) Facilitating domestic-foreign as well as public-private partnerships that can create broad-based employment opportunities and improvements in service-delivery.

j) Helping the GOL – currently overwhelmed by the host and magnitude of the problems it faces -- prioritize necessary reforms and create synergies among them.

k) Assisting GOL efforts to address the longstanding grievances of marginalized communities on issues related to political inclusion, cultural rights, citizenship, and economic equity.

l) Helping the Libyan authorities signal to the communities in question that meaningful change is on the way.

m) Drawing attention to the need for institutionalizing conflict management priorities across the civil service, and offering relevant expertise. This type of intervention could entail the provision of technical assistance on how to integrate conflict management concerns in decision-making processes at the national as well as local levels.

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