
Presentation at SUD SEC MED / Tunis
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
Centre d’Études Meditarranéennes et Internationales
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Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Strategic Environment & History
3. Algeria
4. Egypt
5. Libya
6. Tunisia
7. ... and what could be done?
The current Situation, its Framework Conditions and Root Causes

Current situation:
- Arab Spring
  - hope for a better life not always fulfilled

Depending on the country lack of:
- social standards
- stable governments
- perspectives for the future
- human rights
- (real) democracy
- security (in some regions)

a fertile ground for radicalization

Why?

strategic environment and history
- framework conditions: geography, economy & demography
- roots in history: why are things as they are?
- driving element: religion / radical understanding of Islam
- external factors: Arab bitterness
Islamic Extremist Organizations

- Exploit grievances
- justify political violence through religion & use terrorism as a means
- target “enemies” (local governments, Islamic religious establishment, US/Israel/West)

- Salafism (fastest growing Islamic movement in the world)
  - strict and puritanical approach to Islam – close to Wahhabism (funding!!!)
  - vast majority follows the conservative Hanbali school
  - not necessarily violent, but many Jihadists are hardline Salafists
  - want to forcibly "purify" the Muslim society
  - "liberation" of all Muslim lands is an individual obligation
Al Qaeda’s View of North Africa

- North Africa is an important part of the world-wide conflict
- Large Muslim population
- Proximity to Europe – global reach = global basing required
- Some regions considered as a sanctuary
- Financial
  - Significant base for fund-raising
  - Exploit criminal connections / routes
- Outer links
  - Influence over Muslim groups outside of the region (Europe!!)
  - “Sub-contracting” the global Jihad against the far enemy
    (this includes Europe)
- AQ was surprised by the Arab Spring
Algeria – an ongoing Insurgency 13 yrs after the End of a Civil War

- Algerian civil war 1991-2002: 150.000+ KIA
- painful and violent transition from a military backed dictatorship to a more liberalized form of government
- social unrest & sporadic violent riots in early 2011 – no real challenge to the government
- continued insurgency on decreasing level (AQIM)
- current situation
  - quite stable - suspicion remains about the role of the military
  - a wealthy country with a largely poor population
  - mostly low level AQIM guerilla operations in the northeast and east
  - exception: In Amenas gas field attack (January 13)
  - flow of weapons from Libya (also through Tunisia)
  - International cooperation to keep the pressure on AQIM
- future developments
  - no major change expected, but there is potential for further instability
Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

- origins in Algeria (Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et la Combat – GSPC / 1998)
  - renamed itself in Jan 07 - leader: Abdelmalek Droukdel (since 2004)
  - probably about 5-800 fighters
- transnational radical Islamist ideology
- strategy: similar to AQ, but focused on North Africa
  - final objective: regional fundamentalistic Islamic State under sharia law
  - short-/mid-term aim: establishing, consolidating & expanding safe havens/base areas
- tactics
  - low-level guerilla activities ongoing with periodic mass-casualty attacks (VBIED / SVBIED)
  - Kidnapping – probably the richest AQ organization
- area of operation
  - Algeria (focus NE), Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Tunisia
  - wish of Libyan AQIM member (2012) for a “combat zone” in Libya rejected – Fezzan is too important as a safe haven & logistic base!
- various regional insurgents / splinter groups are cross connected with AQIM
  - example: Katibat al-Muqaoon bil-Dumaa (Bn. of Those Who Sign with Blood)
    - leader: Mokhtar Belmokhtar (responsible for the 16Jan13 attack on In Amenas)
  - links to Boko Haram (Nigeria), Okba Ibn Nafaa (Tunisia) and the IS (several leaders pledged allegiance)
Egypt – Demography & Economy – a very difficult Situation

- **strategic important location (Suez Canal)**
- 99% of a population of 87 million live in the Nile river valley (4% of the country)
- **environmental degradation**
  - loss of agricultural areas – Egypt is not self-sufficient in food any more
- **hydrocarbon industry**
  - 4th largest amount of natural gas reserves in Africa - much is used for electric power plants
  - largest oil refinery capacity in Africa, but consumption is higher than local production
- **main sources of foreign currency income**
  - Suez Canal ($ 5.5 billion in 2014)
  - tourism
  - remittances
- **outlook**
  - population will grow to 95,6 mio by 2026 (+ 1,0 mio/yr)
  - population growth is the highest in the poorest regions
  - together with a lack of economic growth & subsidy & spending programs a bad combination
- Egypt is almost entirely dependent on financial aid from the gulf States
The Strategy of the Terrorists

- The strategy of the Islamic extremists is:
  - to weaken the security forces in specific areas
  - to attack the economy of the country (in particular the three top sources of foreign currency)
  - to provoke over-reactions of the security forces alienate them from the population
  - the worsening security and socioeconomic situation should prepare the ground for mass protests and a public uprising to finally overthrow the government

- Conclusions:
  - Islamic insurgency will not be able to entirely destabilize the country by terrorist means
  - the main danger is that terrorism will deepen the economic difficulties
  - Mass mobilization and social unrests for economic grievances are the most serious risks, which could be eventually exploited by the Islamists
  - It is unlikely that the government will be able to satisfy the expectations of the population in the near future.
Libya – a failed state in North Africa?

- located in the center of the Mediterranean
- Libya maintains the 9th largest reserves of crude oil globally
- root causes of the current situation:
  - the inability of the international recognized government to impose its will and retain the monopoly on violence
  - the rising influence of radical Islamists
  - the legacy of the chaotic administration of the state under the Gaddafi regime
  - the numerous century old tribal conflicts in several parts of the country
- no centralized control of the warring factions
- in the near future the prospects for a “political solution” and a “unity government” are not very bright
The Strategy of IS in Libya (1/2)

- Libya’s geostrategic location provides ideal opportunities for further expansion
  - it is simply the perfect place to destabilize the whole of North Africa and the Sahel
  - the best-suited staging area for terrorist attacks on Europe
  - provides access to an almost inexhaustible amount of income through the hydrocarbon resources.

- illegal immigration:
  - first and foremost a human tragedy, but also
  - a tool to destabilize Europe (see Gaddafi`s threats)
  - a source of income - somehow a follow-up of the former Sahara trade
  - an opportunity for the infiltration of terrorists

- Libya is more & more attractive for international Jihadists

- probable intermediate objective:
  to establish firm control over at least some larger parts of the country to have a firm base for further expansion
The Strategy of IS in Libya (2/2)

- double-pronged strategy:
  - escalation of the armed struggle to capture key facilities and as territory
    - first phase: intimidation of the population in the new targeted area
    - second phase: assassination of former regime supporters, security forces, human rights activists, journalists, other political opponents, and Christian foreigners
    - third phase: takeover of the softened target city in the third phase. The more chaos they create at the beginning, the more likely is the success of their strategy
    - prevent any progress/stabilization and deny the opponents the use of the economic resources
  - law & order and welfare
    - fight on crime and corruption with an iron fist
    - conduct of welfare programs for the needy, in particular for the families of the “martyrs”
    - IS will demonstrate that the wellbeing of its followers is one of its major goals.

- With the help of this strategy,
  - IS intends to convince as many people as possible that its way of Islam is the “solution”
  - whoever cannot be convinced is considered an enemy of Islam and will be overwhelmed by force
  - other jihadi groups active (e.g. AaS) will be absorbed - or exterminated.
- in parallel the fight will be exported to neighboring states to keep the momentum
The Impact of the Libyan Revolution on Regional Security

- Weapons
  - SALW
  - MANPADS
    - mainly Strela-2 / SA-7 (~ 2,000), some Strela-3 / SA-14/16 (100s), few Igla-S / SA-24
    - threat depends on the condition of the weapon and the skill of the operator
  - smuggled to Mali, Niger, Tunisia, Egypt, …
- trained fighters
  - Tunisia & Egypt
  - Tuareg ➔ Mali, Niger
  - Arabs ➔ AQIM, AQAP
  - Arabs ➔ Syria
- Crime
  - smuggling
    - drugs, fuel, all kinds of consumer goods
  - illegal migration
    - from Black Africa to Europe
    - now rapidly growing
Tunisia –
A fertile Ground for radical Islamists ????

- successful transition process as a role model for others
- very high educational standards - and a strong civil society
- very young population (39% below 25 yrs)
- limited natural resources
- transformation of the economy is required (agriculture & textile industry)

- socio-economic situation - some hard facts
  - GDP increase + 2.8 % (2014 est.) not sufficient
  - foreign direct investments not sufficient to jump-start the economy
  - unemployment : 15,2 + (official figure!)
    - 42.3 % youth ages (15-24); in some areas more than 50%
    - 35% (??) of university graduates
  - huge difference in the development of the hinterland from the coast
  - social support for the population did not always get better

- Salafist groups are quite active
The Strategy of the Terrorists

- various Salafist jihadi groups "coordinated" through a common ideology and a common objective are firmly routed in some parts of Tunisia
- exploitation of the grievances of the population in particular parts of the country for recruiting sympathizers and fighters
- destabilization of the country by attacking
  - security forces
  - the economy of the country
  - (increasingly likely) Western targets in Tunisia
- means:
  - assassinations, bomb attacks, raids (up to larger scale coordinated terrorist raids)
  - Salafist charity activities
- immediate objective:
  - establishment of "resistance pockets" in remote areas (like Jebel Chaambi)
  - enlargement of the controlled territory
- ultimate objective: fundamentalistic Islamic State
- assessment: a military victory of the terrorists is not realistic - triggering a social uprising could be their means of choice
... and what can be done?

- Social-economic situation at the bottom of the problem
  → Education and a huge amount of investments required
- Security problems are the “symptoms of the diseases”
  → Are needed to be “treated”, too
  (A certain amount of security is precondition for progress)
- Extremist ideology - needs to be countered at the same level
- Increased focus on transitional justice as well as on fighting corruption & the shadow economy
- Different situation in different countries require different answers - there is not "one" solution
- Focus on Tunisia to create a positive example for the others
- “Let globalization work on them!” as a long-term strategy??
... paraphrasing Mao:
"Terrorists must act like a fish in the ocean!"

Let's change the salt water into fresh water and these dangerous fish will not survive!

Give the people something to lose!
Give them something worth living for!