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# ***Security Risks in North Africa – The Strategy of the Terrorists***

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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?





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# ***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



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## ***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



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## ***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**
  - **exampel: 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)





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## ***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**
  - **4<sup>th</sup> 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 form 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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)***

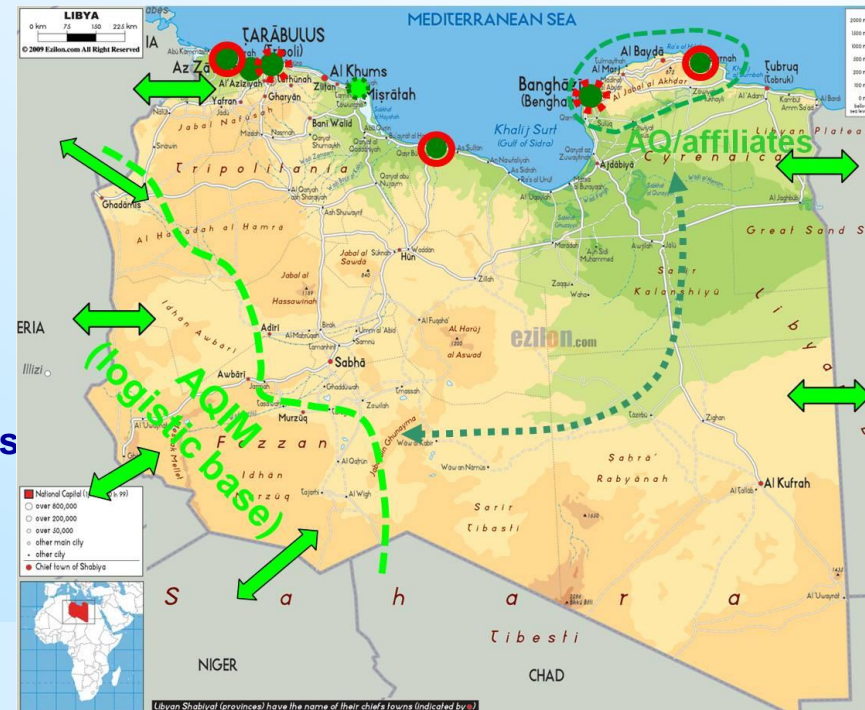
- ◆ **double-pronged strategy :**
  - **escalation of the armed struggle to capture key facilities and as territory**
    - first phase: intimidation of the population in the new targeted area
    - second phase: assassination of former regime supporters, security forces, human rights activists, journalists, 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**



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# 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 Iglas / 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**



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## ***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??**



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***... 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 loose!  
Give them something worth living for!**