

Benghazi CIA Annex and Gun-Running To al-Qaeda-Dominated Syrian Rebels

by William F. Wertz, Jr.

June 14—The Obama Administration’s provision of weapons to an insurgent force dominated by al-Qaeda terrorists, against the government of a nation which is a member of the United Nations, is a violation of international law. To demand regime change, i.e., the overthrow of a sovereign nation, and to supply arms to the forces engaged in overthrowing a sovereign nation, is an act of war, and therefore unconstitutional, since war must be declared by Congress, not by the President. While President Obama has now decided to openly provide weapons to al-Qaeda in Syria, the fact is that the administration has been providing weapons illegally to Foreign Terrorist Organizations, specifically in Libya, to the al-Qaeda-affiliated **Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)**, which then supplied weapons to al-Qaeda in Syria and al-Qaeda in Mali, in collusion with the Obama Administration.

We have already seen the result in Libya, which has undergone a legal coup d’état since the assassination of U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans, by Obama’s al-Qaeda allies.

The key to pulling the plug on Obama’s policy of aggressive war is to determine the truth about the CIA annex in Benghazi. If Congress is not to engage in its own coverup, the issue that Congressional investigators must now answer is: Was Obama—directly or indirectly—transferring weapons to the al-Qaeda-dominated opposition in Syria, in collusion with the LIFG,

with which he allied in Libya, in violation of the U.S. Constitution, to overthrow Qaddafi?

Extensive Evidence

The evidence now establishes that Obama broke international law by approving the provision of weapons to the LIFG through Qatar and the U.A.E., and has since broken international law by illicitly supplying weapons to al-Qaeda forces in Syria.

On March 7, 2011, the *Independent* reported that Obama asked Saudi Arabia to supply arms to the Libyan opposition. This occurred despite the fact that the UN Security Council had unanimously imposed an arms embargo to and from Libya on Feb. 26, 2011. In the Spring of 2011, Obama approved the provision of weapons by Qatar and the U.A.E. to the Libyan opposition, according to the *New York Times*. Those weapons did not go to the **Libyan Transitional National Coun-**



Muammar Qaddafi's tent burns as the rebels take over the city of Tripoli, Aug. 24, 2011. After Qaddafi's murder, a UN report wrote, Syria "presented a prominent destination for Libyan fighters."

cil (TNC), but directly to the LIFG, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

The UN Panel of Experts confirmed that Qatar and the U.A.E. violated the UN arms embargo, in reports to the President of the Security Council on March 20, 2012, Feb. 15, 2013, and April 9, 2013.

In respect to Qatar, the UN [report](#) states that despite that country's denials, "the Panel stands by its findings that Qatar supplied arms and ammunition to the opposition during the uprising in breach of the arms embargo." The report also points to the collusion of NATO in violating the UN-imposed no-fly zone and arms embargo. Citing flights organized by the U.A.E., the report states that the flights "received deconfliction numbers from NATO, the existence of the no-fly zone and the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council in resolutions 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011) notwithstanding."

The report confirms that, since the overthrow of Qaddafi, "The Syrian Arab Republic has presented a prominent destination for Libyan fighters. A number of them have joined brigades as individuals or through networks to support the Syrian opposition. . . . [M]ilitary materiel has also been sent out from Libya to the Syrian Arab Republic through networks and routes passing through either Turkey or northern Lebanon. . . . Transfers of military materiel have been organized from various locations in Libya, including Misrata and Benghazi. The significant size of some shipments and the logistics involved suggest that representatives of the Libyan local authorities might have at least been aware of the transfers, if not actually directly involved."

This occurred despite the fact that the UN arms embargo is against weapons not only being shipped to Libya, but also being exported from Libya.

Unraveling the U.S. Role

During the same month that Qaddafi was assassinated, October 2011, **Mustafa Abdul Jalil, the head of the Libyan TNC**, and **Burhan Ghalioun, the head of the Syrian National Council**, reached an agreement for military support to the Syrian opposition from Libya. The **Emir of the LIFG, Abdelhakim Belhadj**, then traveled to Turkey in November 2011 to meet with the Syrian Free Army to provide training and weapons. The same month, 600 LIFG terrorists went to Syria to



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A man-portable air defense missile (MANPAD). Tens of thousands of these U.S. weapons were strewn across Libya after the war, and the militias refused to give them up.

commence military training and operations. They were led by **Mahdi al-Harati, deputy commander of the Tripoli Military Council** under Belhadj. On Dec. 11, 2011, an agreement was signed in Tripoli among Jalil, Belhadj, **Rashid al-Ghannushi** (head of the Muslim Brotherhood in Tunisia), **Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hamad Jabber bin Jassim al-Thani**, and the number two of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, to provide weapons and fighters to overthrow Syrian President Hafez al-Assad.

This agreement could not have been effected without the support and direction of the Obama Administration.

Various accounts assign responsibility to either elements of the State Department or the CIA. Some reports indicate that the entire operation in Benghazi was a CIA operation, operating under the cover of the State Department. According to [Benghazi: The Definitive Report](#), by Brandon Webb and Jack Murphy (New York: William Morrow, February 2013), the operation was run by now-CIA Director John Brennan outside of the traditional command structure, with Obama's approval. Brennan, as the director of Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, was also the head of the National Security Staff.

The book reports that the United States had been facilitating, or at the very least allowing, large weapons transfers from Libya to rebel fighters in Syria. The authors maintain that this did not fall under the purview of a Foreign Services officer in the State Department, such as Ambassador Stevens, but rather, "Stevens likely helped consolidate as many weapons as possible after the war to safeguard them, at which point Brennan exported them overseas to start another conflict."

What did the State Department say? On Feb. 2, 2012, Andrew J. Shapiro, Assistant Secretary of State

for the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, said in a [speech](#) that the United States was engaged in Libya in the most extensive effort to combat the proliferation of man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) in U.S. history. Libya had acquired 20,000 MANPADS and, according to Shapiro, only 5,000 could be accounted for as of that date. He further reported that many of the weapons were taken by militias and that many of the militias remain reluctant to relinquish them. Furthermore, he said that “we cannot rule out that some weapons may have leaked out of Libya.”

Shapiro reported that in August 2011, when the opposition captured Tripoli, Washington immediately deployed a State Department expert from the MANPADS Task Force to Benghazi, Mark Adams. The initial primary objective was to reach an agreement with the TNC to set up a MANPADS control and destruction program.¹ He pointed out that since the United States did not have tens of thousands of forces on the ground, our efforts had to be carefully coordinated with and fully supported by the TNC. The British government also provided teams and experts, he said.

What Shapiro did not report is that in August 2011, the LIFG’s Belhadj led the takeover of Tripoli, thanks to the backing of Qatar, and became the commander of the Tripoli Military Council, in charge of coordinating defense on a national level, under the TNC, and that, on Sept. 4, 2011, he was appointed to the Supreme Security Council. One week after he was appointed to command the Tripoli Military Council, Belhadj (founder of the February 17th Brigade), Ismael al-Sallabi (head of the February 17 Brigade), and TNC head Jalil went to Qatar, where they met with the financiers of the revolution and NATO officials, according to Kronos Advisory, LLC.

Numerous reports indicate that Belhadj was Stevens’ liaison to the Libyan opposition when Stevens first entered Benghazi on April 5, 2011, after being appointed the official U.S. liaison to the opposition in March 2011.

It is widely recognized that the LIFG, with which Stevens liaised, publicly demanded weapons, including



Al-Qaeda terrorists in the war against Syria. Everyone knows that the al-Qaeda fighters are the only ones in the “opposition” who are militarily effective. So who believes that Obama’s promise to send weapons only to the “good guys” means anything at all?

Stinger anti-aircraft missiles.² And a *Wall Street Journal* article on Sept. 2, 2011, reported that the Qaddafi regime’s intelligence files warned that French weapons, including Stingers and Milan anti-tank rockets, were making their way to Libyan rebels via Sudan.

On Sept. 27, 2011, ABC News reported that Peter Bouckaert of Human Rights Watch had taken pictures in Libya of pickup truckloads of missiles being carted off by the Libya opposition. He said: “I myself could have removed several hundred if I wanted to, and people can literally drive up with pickup trucks or even 18 wheelers and take away whatever they want. Every time I arrive at one of these weapons facilities, the first thing we notice going missing is the surface-to-air missiles.” Richard Clark, former White House counterterrorism advisor and now a consultant to ABC News, said, “I think the probability of al-Qaeda being able to smuggle some of the Stinger-like missiles out of Libya is probably pretty high.”

Shipments to Syria

It is well established that such weapons have been shipped to the Syrian opposition and also to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb. On April 27, 2012, according to

1. Glen Doherty, one of the Americans killed in Benghazi on Sept. 11, 2012, gave an interview to ABC News one month before his death, in which he stated that he was working as a contractor with the State Department to track down and destroy MANPADS in Libya. He said he had traveled throughout Libya chasing reports of weapons and destroying them.

2. In respect to shipments of surface-to-air missiles to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb, AP reported on June 12, 2013 that a detailed manual on how to operate SAM-7s was found in Timbuktu, Mali, which confirms that the al-Qaeda group there is training its fighters to use these weapons, which likely came from Libya.

the UN Panel of Experts report, Lebanese authorities seized a shipment of arms and ammunition destined for the opposition forces in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Panel inspected the shipment and concluded that “the shipment consisted of Libyan arms and ammunition that were transferred to the *Letfallah II* in breach of the arms embargo.” The shipment included “SA-24 short range surface-to-air missiles and SA-7b man-portable air defense systems, anti-tank guided missiles,” etc.

Then, on Sept. 14, 2012, three days after Stevens was killed, the *Times* of London reported that a Libyan ship carrying weapons, including SAM-7³ surface-to-air anti-aircraft missiles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) for the Syrian opposition, had docked in Turkey. The UN has confirmed that the ship was the *al-Entisar*. It sailed from Benghazi to Iskenderun, Turkey, where it docked on Aug. 25, 2012, returning to Benghazi on Sept. 3.

Both of these documented shipments to Syria from Libya, and undoubtedly others, occurred after Obama signed a secret order authorizing the CIA to help coordinate the shipment of weapons by Saudi Arabia and Qatar to the Syrian opposition.

So, on the one hand, beginning August 2011, the U.S. and U.K. were reportedly trying to secure the MANPADS in Libya; but on the other, the Obama Administration, which approved the illegal provision of weapons by Qatar and the U.A.E. to the LIFG, had enlisted that ally to provide arms and jihadists to the effort to overthrow Assad.

While the European Union, under pressure from the British, has now lifted the embargo on sending weapons to the al-Qaeda-dominated opposition in Syria, and Obama himself is now proceeding to openly arm the al-Qaeda-dominated Syrian opposition, the fact is that Obama has been illegally arming the Syrian opposition since early 2012.

Sometime in early 2012, or perhaps earlier, Obama signed a “finding” that permitted the CIA and other U.S. agencies to provide support to the Syrian opposition, Reuters reported on Aug. 1, 2012. The agency added that the U.S. was collaborating with a secret command center operated by Turkey, Saudi Arabia,

3. While that base is technically a Qatari Air Force Base, there were probably only 100 or so Qatari personnel stationed there, as of 2010, and over 10,000 U.S. personnel. This is clearly a U.S. operation run under Qatari cover.



Abdel Hakim Belhadj, who was the Emir of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), led the rebel takeover of Tripoli and later worked to arm the Syrian opposition.

and Qatar near the Syrian border, in Adana, Turkey, which is five miles east of Incirlik, a U.S. air base where U.S. military and intelligence agencies maintain a presence.

The arms airlift which began in early 2012 expanded after the November Presidential elections, according to the *New York Times* on March 24, 2013 (“Arms Airlift to Syria Rebels Expands, with Aid from CIA”): “More than 160 military cargo flights by Jordanian, Saudi and Qatari military-style cargo planes land[ed] at Esenboga Airport near Ankara, and, to a lesser degree, at other Turkish and Jordanian airports.” The CIA has been directly involved in this operation, the *Times* reported:

“From offices at secret locations, American intelligence officers have helped the Arab governments shop for weapons, including a large procurement from Croatia.

“Qatar and Saudi Arabia had been shipping military materials via Turkey to the opposition since early and late 2012. Simultaneously, arms and equipment were being purchased by Saudi Arabia in Croatia and flown to Jordan on Jordanian cargo planes for rebels working in southern Syria and for retransfer to Turkey for rebels groups operating from there.

“On a string of nights from April 26 through May 4 [2012], a Qatari Air Force C-17—a huge American-made cargo plane—made six landings in Turkey, at Es-

enboga Airport. By Aug. 8 the Qataris had made 14 more cargo flights. All came from Al Udeid Air Base⁴ in Qatar, a hub for American military logistics in the Middle East.

“American officials have confirmed that senior White House officials were regularly briefed on the shipments.

“Through the fall [of 2012], the Qatari Air Force cargo fleet became even more busy, running flights almost every other day in October. . . . Soon other players joined the airlift: In November, three Royal Jordanian Air Force C-130s landed in Esenboga, in a hint at what would become a stepped-up Jordanian and Saudi role. Within three weeks, two other Jordanian cargo planes began making a round-trip run between Amman, the capital of Jordan, and Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, where . . . the aircraft were picking up a large Saudi purchase of infantry arms from a Croatian-controlled stockpile.”

The Jordanian planes bore the logo of the Jordanian

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The Al-Qaeda Executive

Financed and deployed by the British-Saudi Empire, al-Qaeda has been protected by the Obama Administration to accomplish the Empire's global war. In this feature [video](#), LaRouchePAC documents President Obama's use of the al-Qaeda networks to overthrow Qaddafi in Libya, and to carry out bloody regime-change against Assad in Syria, by the same forces who attacked the U.S. consulate in Benghazi.

www.larouchepac.com

International Air Cargo firm, which the article reports is a front company for Jordan's Air Force.

Summary: What We Know

This is the same modus operandi used in Libya by Obama, who first approached the Saudis to supply weapons to the Libyan opposition. He then approved the provision of weapons to the Libyan opposition by Qatar and the U.A.E., as long as the weapons supplied were not made in the U.S.A.

At present we know:

- that Obama illegally armed the al-Qaeda-affiliated LIFG;
- that there was an agreement reached in Tripoli in October 2011, and then expanded in December 2011, involving Ambassador Stevens' liaison Abdelhakim Belhadj, to arm the Syrian opposition;
- that arms and fighters were sent from Libya to Syria as a result of that agreement, and that Belhadj traveled to Turkey to coordinate the deal;
- that approximately 15,000 MANPADS are unaccounted for in Libya and that some have been sent to Syria and Mali by the militias controlled by Belhadj;
- that the official policy of the United States was to track down these MANPADS and destroy them, and that Glen Doherty was part of that mission;
- that the militias resisted disarming;
- that Obama signed a secret order setting up a base in Turkey to coordinate the shipment of weapons to Syria with Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey.

The Obama Administration and its allies in the U.S. Senate and House will be content to avoid these issues and address tertiary issues. In order to prevent the disclosure of what was really happening in Benghazi, they will argue that the mission of the CIA in Benghazi is classified. That cannot be allowed to happen. The crime of allying with al-Qaeda and the Muslim Brotherhood in both Libya and Syria to overthrow sovereign governments, without the constitutionally mandated consent of Congress and in violation of international law, is an impeachable offense.

The body of evidence presented here must be immediately investigated by the Congress, and if it is determined that Obama has indeed armed al-Qaeda, as all of the readily available evidence indicates, he must be impeached or forced to resign. Otherwise, the escalation in Syria brings the world to the verge of a thermo-nuclear World War III.