



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on April 26, 2011

Former Guantanamo Prisoner Now U.S. Ally in Libya

A former inmate at the notorious Guantanamo Bay prison who was considered a “probable” member of al Qaeda and a “medium-to-high risk” is now among the leadership of the U.S.-backed Libyan rebellion aiming to depose dictator Moammar Gadhafi, according to leaked documents cited in media reports.



The former prisoner turned American ally, known as Abu Sufian Ibrahim Ahmed Hamuda bin Qumu, was captured in Pakistan after the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. He was then sent to Guantanamo Bay, where, according to [classified documents](#) released by WikiLeaks, U.S. analysts determined in 2005 that he was a “former member of the [al Qaeda-linked] [Libyan Islamic Fighting Group](#) (LIFG), [a] probable member of al Qaeda and a member of the North African Extremist Network.”

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In addition to admittedly working for al Qaeda front groups in Afghanistan, bin Qumu “has a long-term association with Islamic extremist jihad and members of al-Qaeda and other extremist groups,” the document explained. During his time working for an al Qaeda organization in Kabul, bin Qumu “used his employment ... as a front for extremist activities.” Also, while in Pakistan’s tribal region, bin Qumu “communicated with likely extremist element[s] in Afghanistan via radio ..., indicating a position of leadership.”

Citing intelligence obtained from the Libyan regime when it was still a U.S. ally several years ago, the secret report said bin Qumu was considered a “dangerous man with no qualms about committing terrorist acts.” The document also said the prisoner was known as one of the “extremist commanders of the Afghan Arabs,” referring to jihadists in Afghanistan who were [funded, armed, and trained by the U.S. government](#) before apparently turning against it.

But even though American officials believed bin Qumu represented a “medium-to-high risk” and that “he is likely to pose a threat to the U.S., its interests and allies,” he was sent to Libya in 2007 following six years in Guantanamo. The next year, he was set free under an amnesty program.

Now, a 51-year-old bin Qumu — with U.S. and international military support — is [reportedly leading](#) a band of anti-Gadhafi rebels known as the “Darnah Brigade.” He had promised to do an interview with the *New York Times* last week but never showed up, according to the paper.

“The former enemy and prisoner of the United States is now an ally of sorts, a remarkable turnabout



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resulting from shifting American policies rather than any obvious change in Mr. Qumu," the *Times* wrote in a piece about the jihadist.

Prior to being sent to Guantanamo, bin Qumu already had a long, documented history of problems with the law. According to the leaked report, he was sentenced to 10 years in a Libyan prison for "murder, physical assault, armed assault and distributing narcotics" after serving in the Gadhafi regime's military.

He eventually escaped from the Libyan prison in 1993 and fled through Egypt to Afghanistan. There, he trained in at least two al Qaeda terror camps, according to news reports.

The U.K. *Telegraph* [reported](#) that bin Qumu eventually moved to Sudan, where he went to work for a company owned by al Qaeda boss Osama bin Laden. Finally he returned to the Afghanistan-Pakistan region to help in the battle against U.S. forces before being captured by Pakistani police and shipped to Guantanamo.

Another former Guantanamo detainee who was arrested fighting U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Abdul-Hakim al-Hasidi, is also a prominent leader in the Libyan rebellion. In an interview with an Italian newspaper, he [admitted](#) that many of his fighters had been battling American troops in Iraq not long ago. He even praised al Qaeda, a group of Islamic terrorists originally supported by the U.S. government, calling them "good Muslims" who were "fighting against the invader."

Al-Hasidi's organization, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), represents the second largest contingent of foreign fighters in Iraq currently battling U.S. and coalition forces. And according to the U.S. government, the LIFG officially merged with al Qaeda in 2007.

The Libyan group is still on the U.S. State Department's terror list. And prominent American officials including then-CIA boss George Tenet have warned that organizations such as LIFG represent "one of the most immediate threats" to U.S. security. But after the U.S. government provided air support, weapons, and money for the Libyan rebellion, al-Hasidi said his fighters don't hate America quite as much anymore.

"Our view is starting to change of the U.S.," he told the *Wall Street Journal* earlier this month. "If we hated the Americans 100 percent, today it is less than 50 percent. They have started to redeem themselves for their past mistakes by helping us to preserve the blood of our children." It is unclear whether a 50-percent level of hatred would still justify attacks against Americans using the weapons the U.S. government is providing.

As *The New American* [reported](#) and U.S. officials have since acknowledged, numerous leading figures in the rebellion are known to be affiliated with terror groups including al Qaeda and related organizations. Some are apparently well connected to the international establishment too, according to analysts commenting on the rebels' [seemingly strange decision to create a central bank](#) amidst the revolutionary chaos.

Meanwhile, U.S. Senator John McCain just visited the rebels in Libya and said the American government should immediately step up its efforts to aid the anti-Gadhafi cause. He claimed that failure to do so could lead to a stalemate.

"And if you're worried about al-Qaeda entering into this fight, nothing would bring al-Qaeda in more rapidly and more dangerously than a stalemate," McCain told NBC's Meet the Press. Ironically, this is the same U.S. Senator who, according to [another leaked document](#), [visited](#) the Gadhafi regime in 2009



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and “assured [Gadhafi’s son] Mutassim that the United States wanted to provide Libya with the [military] equipment it needs for its security.” Of course, that was two years ago, when, [according to Sen. Joe Lieberman](#), Libya was still “an important [U.S.] ally in the war on terrorism.”

The Obama administration has already made clear that it [does not care what Congress thinks about its most recent war](#), but Sen. McCain’s statements are certainly revealing.

More than anything else, however, critics charge that the [unconstitutional U.S. attack against Libya](#) illustrates the absurdity of America’s current foreign policy. By supporting dictators and terrorists across the globe — and later turning against some of them — the U.S. government has created a fiasco of unimaginable proportions.

Now the FBI says [it is “on guard” for a possible terror attack emanating from Libya](#) — perhaps from the [rebels America is supporting](#); or maybe from Gadhafi’s increasingly desperate government that is rapidly running out of options as NATO warplanes [bomb his compounds](#) in the capital city of Tripoli. But as long the U.S. government’s apparent madness continues, critics [say](#), America will never really be safe.

Photo: Libyan rebels atop the vehicle of General Abdel-Fattah Younis, the former interior minister in the Gadhafi regime who defected and who paid a visit to the front line near Brega, Libya: AP Images



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