

Qadhafi's complex regime unravels

As senior officials and military officers desert the regime in ever greater numbers, Colonel Muammar Qadhafi's deliberately chaotic labyrinth of rival governmental and security institutions is collapsing. Understanding how he played off competing factions within the regime against each other to prevent any alternative power structure from emerging is fundamental to assessing how this crisis could end and what will follow, writes **John Hamilton**

According to Qadhafi's *Green Book* political philosophy, authority in the Jamahiriya (State of the Masses) system formally lies with the people, which is why Libya has no head of state. In fact it has been defined by how far individuals are from the Leader, the inviolable position which he created for himself outside the system. The closest circle of influence is sometimes referred to as "the men of the tent". Assessing who is inside is difficult. But among Qadhafi's closest henchmen are **Abdalla Senoussi** and **Musa Kusa**. Senoussi is a member of the **Megraha** tribe and is married to a sister of Qadhafi's second wife. In 1993 he was appointed chief of Libya's top intelligence service the *Jamahiriya Security Organisation*. Foreign minister **Kusa** is a trusted comrade who led the *External Security Organisation* for many years. He is named in official documents from the UK police investigation into the murder of PC **Yvonne Fletcher** outside the Libyan Embassy in St James's Square in 1984. It may require figures from this group to turn against Qadhafi to topple him.

Outside this inner circle of diehard supporters there is no unity. The sclerotic General People's Congress (approximately equivalent to parliament) supposedly represents the views of every single individual via a branching network of local committees that everyone is supposed to attend – although nobody does. The system has never worked and is despised by Libyans. The congress's headquarters was one of the first buildings to be torched in Tripoli. Looking forwards to the post-Qadhafi era, one of the first challenges will be to reinstate some sort of legitimate assembly in its place.

"Committees everywhere"

In the mid-1970s Qadhafi became dissatisfied by the congress and established the feared *Revolutionary Committees* which play a role similar to the *Communist Party* in the Soviet system. This is still one of the regime's most hated institutions. In the mid-1990s, Qadhafi added another layer of complexity, creating the

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Oil output falters

Oil output has ceased or will shortly do so. In a rambling speech delivered over the telephone to Libyan national television on 24 February, Colonel **Muammar Qadhafi** suggested that oil may have already stopped flowing and then said that it might do soon. Attempting to cow protestors into giving up their rebellion he asked "how will people live?" Speaking in Rome on the same day, *Eni* CEO **Paolo Scaroni** said the country had lost 1.2m b/d of exports, the highest official estimate yet. Total sales amount to about 1.5m b/d.

Eni has itself said that it has cut part of its oil output and it has stopped exporting gas. In an official statement on 22 February it said "supplies of natural gas from Libya through the Greenstream pipeline have been suspended". Output from the westernmost oil terminal at **Mellitah**, operated by *Eni's* joint venture *Mellitah Oil and Gas (MOG)*, which is also Greenstream's departure point, may have also stopped.

The next terminal along from **Mellitah** is at the town of **Az-Zawia**, less than 100km west of

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Anarchy spreads as Qadhafi loses control

Colonel **Muammar Qadhafi's** failure to appear on national television on 24 February – electing instead to address the nation via telephone – was another indication that **Libya's** revolutionary leader was retreating further into his Tripoli bunker. The rest of the country has slipped from his grasp. The "Brother Leader" is concentrating his remaining force on defending the stronghold in the capital, which is still under some sort of military-imposed order. One London-based Libyan who was in contact with his family told *CbI* that protestors were heading out at night on "hit and run" missions to burn police stations and

Revolutionary Committee buildings. Armed militias and state security forces roam the streets firing their weapons.

For ex-patriates stuck in Libya after four days of unexpected rebellion, the security situation is looking increasingly hazardous. Some oil field engineers are still stuck in locations in the Sirte and Ghadames basins. One security expert currently advising a company on the security of an exploration team in a remote part of the western desert, not close to an established desert camp, said that he had advised them "to stay put". The dangers of attempting

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Oil output falters

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Tripoli, which was in the grip of the uprising on Wednesday afternoon. One eyewitness told *Al-Jazeera* that regime forces had shot and killed about 100 people in the town's Martyr's Square where more than 3,000 people had gathered to protest.

Both *Repsol's Acacus Oil Operations* and *Total's Mabrouk Oil Operations* export from here. On 22 February, Repsol spokesman **Kristian Rix** said the company had "suspended all operations in Libya, including exploration and production". Total confirmed on the same day that it had started to suspend some output.

According to numerous media reports, the government has lost control of cities along the coast from the Egyptian border to Misratah which is some 250km east of Tripoli. The country's remaining five oil terminals may therefore all be in the hands of opposition forces. Three oil terminals: As-Sidrah, Ras Lanuf and Marsa al-Brega are located within 200km of each other in the southern bight of the Gulf of Sirte. It is not clear whether they are still operating.

The *Waha Oil Company*, a joint venture between *National Oil Corporation* and US companies *ConocoPhillips*, *Hess* and *Marathon Oil Corporation* exports from As-Sidrah. On 21 February, the company said in an emailed statement that it was

"unaware of any impact to production". *Canada's Suncor*, whose *Harouge Oil Operations* joint venture exports about 110,000 b/d from Ras Lanuf, has declined to comment in more detail in "the interest of the safety and security of our people". It said most employees and all dependents had been evacuated and that remaining employees were in safe locations. Exports from Marsa al-Brega come from the 100% state owned *Sirte Oil Company* and *Arabian Gulf Oil Company*.

The Zueitina terminal south of Benghazi takes oil from fields operated by Eni's MOG and *Occidental Petroleum's Zueitina Oil Company* joint ventures. On 23 February, Oxy's communications vice-president told *CbI* that the company's "Libya production continues with operations managed by Oxy's Libyan national employees and contractors." The company's expatriate employees have all been evacuated. Zueitina's total output is about 50,000 b/d.

Furthest in the east, the *Az-Zuwaya* tribe which occupies lands south of Benghazi says that it has taken control of *Agoco's* Sarir, Messla and Nafoora-Augila fields. Much of the oil produced from these fields goes out through the Marsa Al-Harigah terminal (next to the Egyptian border) which is now in opposition hands.

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People's Social Leadership Committees whose members come from the heads of families, tribes and regional structures. In late 2009, Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi turned down an offer to become leader of this organisation, which would have effectively made him his father's deputy.

Below these committees are innumerable overlapping ministries, institutions, authorities and funds which actually run the country day to day. Even before the current crisis, in-fighting between officials had intensified to a debilitating extent. This has often been characterised as a struggle between reformers and conservatives, but could equally well be explained as the exercise of personal rivalries for control of lucrative positions in a highly corrupt system. As a recent *Wikileaks* cable from January 2009 showed, Qadhafi was using the *Riqaba Shabia*, the main anti-corruption committee as a tool for exerting patronage and control, making sure that "entities headed by regime loyalists administer particularly plum contracts, ensuring that they are well-positioned to extract rents from foreign companies", allowing politically-appointed officials "to extract rents and bribes". As the regime implodes, the vast fortunes hidden outside Libya's borders by many officials up to and including ruling family members will need to be investigated and seized.

The tribes fall out

Although Qadhafi initially made the abolition of tribalism one of the core tenets of his revolution, he has increasingly used inter-tribal rivalries and divisions to maintain his grip. The Qadhadhfa tribe from which he comes is sometimes referred to as a sub-tribe of the much more powerful Warfalla, which numbers about one million members largely based in the west of the country. Many officers in the *Free Unionist Officers' Movement*, which backed Qadhafi's 1969 coup against King Idris Sanussi came from the Warfalla. However, in 1993, about 2,000 officers from the tribe attempted a coup against Qadhafi, who reacted with bloody reprisals. That the Warfalla has now allied itself with the protests is therefore significant.

The other tribe which is strongly loyal to Qadhafi is the Megraha (of which the Lockerbie bomber Abdelbasset Al-Megrahi is a member – hence the importance of getting him repatriated from Scotland). Watching what position this tribe takes will also be instructive. The opposition in the east of Libya, although often characterised as Islamic in character is also deeply tribal. The old monarchy was supported by and awarded privileges to the loyal tribes of Cyrenaica's Green Mountains. A low level insurgency against Qadhafi's rule in these mountains has never ceased. One of the worst case scenarios for the country is its partition into autonomous eastern and western regions.

Qadhafi has relied heavily on his own tribe, which comes from Sirte in the central coastal region, and also on non-tribal members of Libyan society to fill important security positions. Officers with the surname Qadhafi or Qadhaf Al-Dam (the "blood of Qadhafi") predominate in the lists of regional military governors, *Republican Guard* leaders and senior Revolutionary Committee members. However, because of the relatively lowly status of the Qadhadhfa in Libya's tribal hierarchy, it is unlikely that any figure from this part of the establishment could wield power in Qadhafi's place.

In common with this pattern of divide and rule, Qadhafi has created a large number of intelligence and state security bodies, so that Libyans can never know who might be informing on them. The Libyan army is itself a weak and fractured institution which Qadhafi has never trusted and always kept at arms length. Army chief Major General Abu Bakr Yunis Jabir, an old comrade of the Leader, is reportedly under house arrest after refusing to order troops to fire on protestors. Units in the east are reported to have joined the protests raising the possibility of a civil conflict with the elite and well-equipped *32nd Reinforced Brigade of the Armed People* led by Qadhafi's sixth son Captain Khemis Al-Qadhafi, which is also reported to be operating in Cyrenaica. Khemis – reputed to be a highly professional soldier – is unlikely to turn on his own father, but some other senior military figure will eventually have to. Qadhafi is unlikely to go alive, so the denouement will be bloody.

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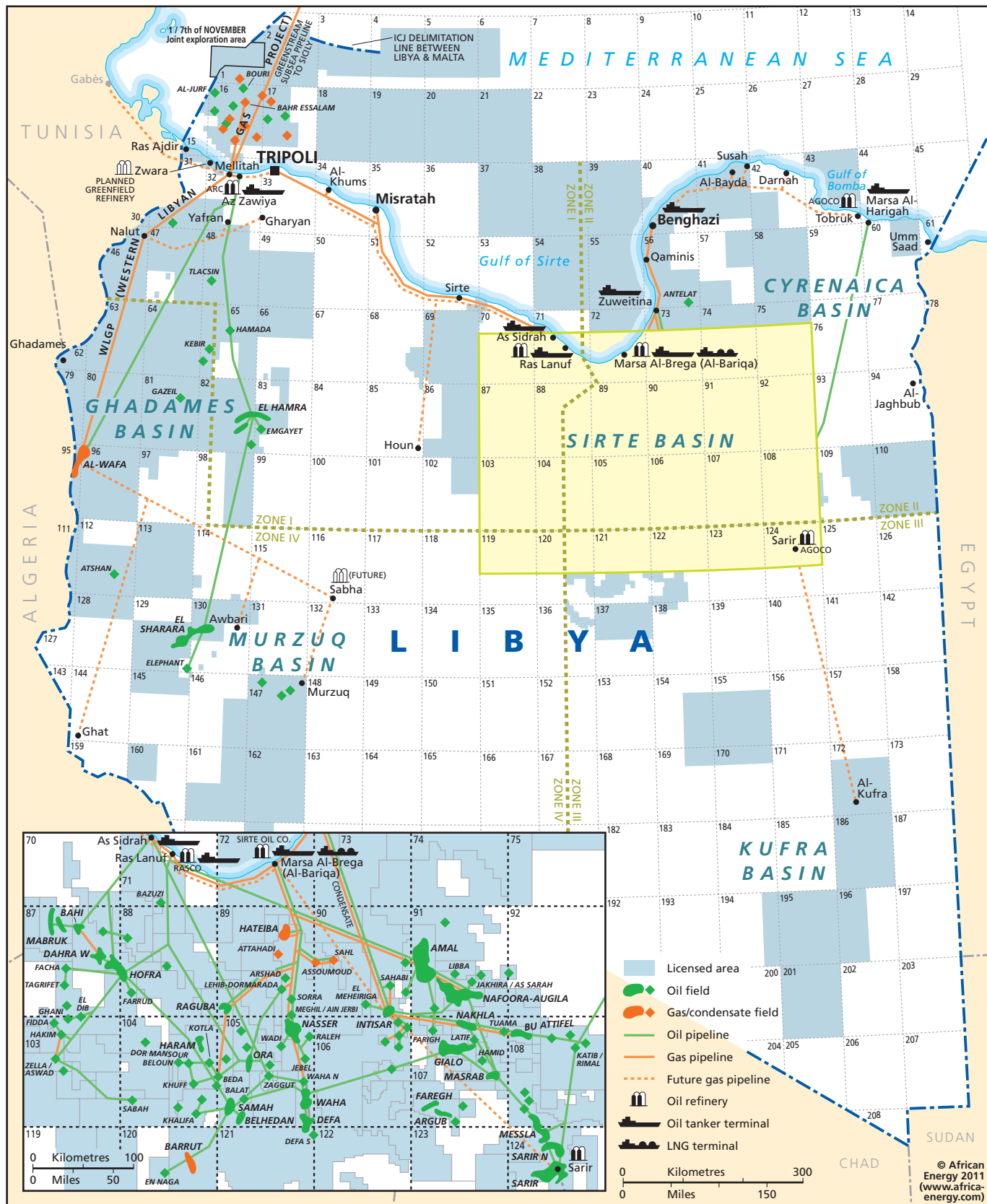
to get back to Tripoli were too great he said. One of the chief problems is that bands of "unofficial" armed militias are now present on the roads so safe passage cannot be guaranteed.

According to an informed source, *Eni* are believed to be planning to evacuate their two offshore rigs at the Bouri and Bahr Es-Salaam fields "because people there are at risk". The company appears to be taking seriously the threat that Qadhafi might attempt to destroy oil and gas installations as a final act before his departure. In the town of Misratah, which is the location of the main port from which offshore exploration operations are supported, opposition committees have been set up to run the city according to reports on *Al-Jazeera* television. Roadblocks have also been set up defend the city from the army. A source based outside Libya who has been in constant contact with people in the town

told *Cbl* that forces loyal to Qadhafi may have attempted to retake the city but had not succeeded.

The *BBC* has reported on the plight of engineers trapped in camps in the Sirte Basin who fear that they are exposed to armed looters. **Tony Blakeway**, a British oil worker at the Amal camp, located at the field operated by *Suncor-NOC* joint venture *Harouge Oil Operations* said that looters were expected to return at night. "We need help from the British government to get us out," he wrote in a message to the *BBC's* news website. Another British oil worker called for an *RAF* plane to rescue workers from the Zueitina 103 oilfield in the western part of the Sirte Basin. All these camps are vulnerable since the withdrawal of official army security some days ago. "We had vehicles stolen at knifepoint, even though we barricaded ourselves in after the army security left," the engineer wrote.

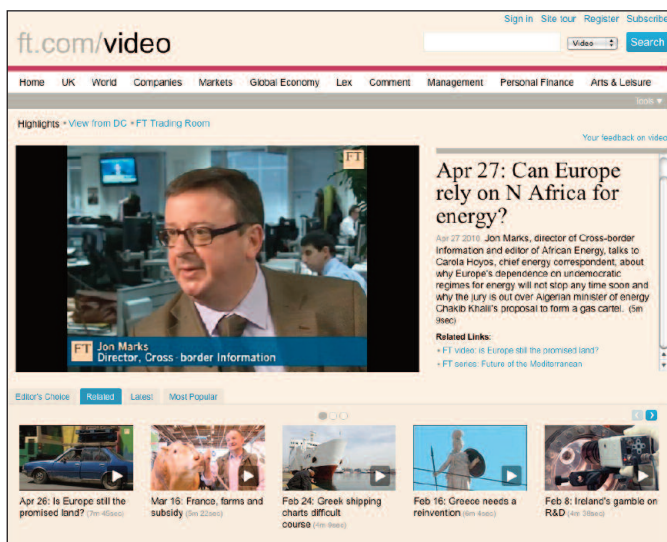
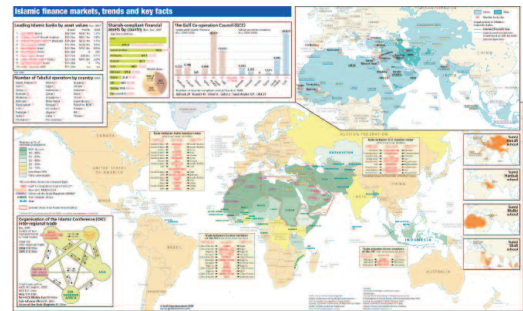
Libyan hydrocarbons exploration, production facilities & export terminals



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