

# THE BENGHAZI SUSPECT WAS HEADED TO SYRIA

This Eli Lake story describing what has happened to one of two Benghazi suspects arrested in Turkey confirms something I long suspected: he was headed for Syria.

These people say Turkish officials held [Ali Ani] al-Harzi for less than a week at the behest of the U.S. government, then sent him to Tunisia. There, he was kept in military custody until last week, when he was transferred to a jail in preparation for a court trial. It's unclear what role he might have played in the attacks or what he might be charged with. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. intelligence community are working with Tunisian authorities, but there has been no deal yet on whether to send al-Harzi to the U.S. or keep him in Tunisia where he could be charged under the country's own counterterrorism laws. The Tunisians have also not yet allowed U.S. officials direct access to the suspect.

Al-Harzi is a member of violent extremist networks in North Africa, one U.S. intelligence officer told The Daily Beast. This person added that **he was also connected to jihadist organizations in the Middle East and was headed to Syria** when he was detained in Turkey.  
[my emphasis]

Think about what it means that a guy who had just bragged about attacking our Benghazi mission was headed for Syria—through Turkey.

While there have long been claims that jihadists involved in overthrowing Qaddafi (though remember, this guy is Tunisian) made up some of the fighters in Syria, this makes it clear how unfriendly to American interests some of those

jihadists are. Moreover, it suggests terrorists now consider Syria a kind of hiding place. (Note, Lake's September 28 story reporting his brag may well have alerted al-Harzi that he needed to seek refuge.)

The apparent link between the people who attacked the mission in Benghazi and the "freedom fighters" in Syria explains something else. This month there has been a series of stories detailing how the jihadists in Syria are the ones getting arms; there's also some blame-game going on, with sources trying to blame Qatar, and not Saudi Arabia, for arming terrorists. I can see now why these countries are scrambling to absolve themselves of arming terrorists—because the terrorists have ties to attacks on the US. (Incidentally, it shouldn't make sense ideologically, but I keep thinking about the fact that Qaddafi's old spook Moussa Koussa is hanging out in Qatar these days.)

One more point about this. Though this arrest was reported on October 4, the arrest itself took place on October 3, the same day Turkey decided to start shelling Syria.

That was also the day of the first Presidential debate. I said then—and believe even more now—that one of the reasons Obama did so poorly in that debate is because he had just been briefed on increasing hostilities in Syria. He had also, presumably, just been briefed that one of the guys involved in the Benghazi attack was fleeing to Syria to take part in those increasing hostilities.

There has always been reason to worry about Qatar and Saudi Arabia's attempts to do in Syria what they did in Afghanistan in the 1990s. But this seems like pretty strong circumstantial evidence that the Qatar-armed terrorists in Syria would ultimately target the US.