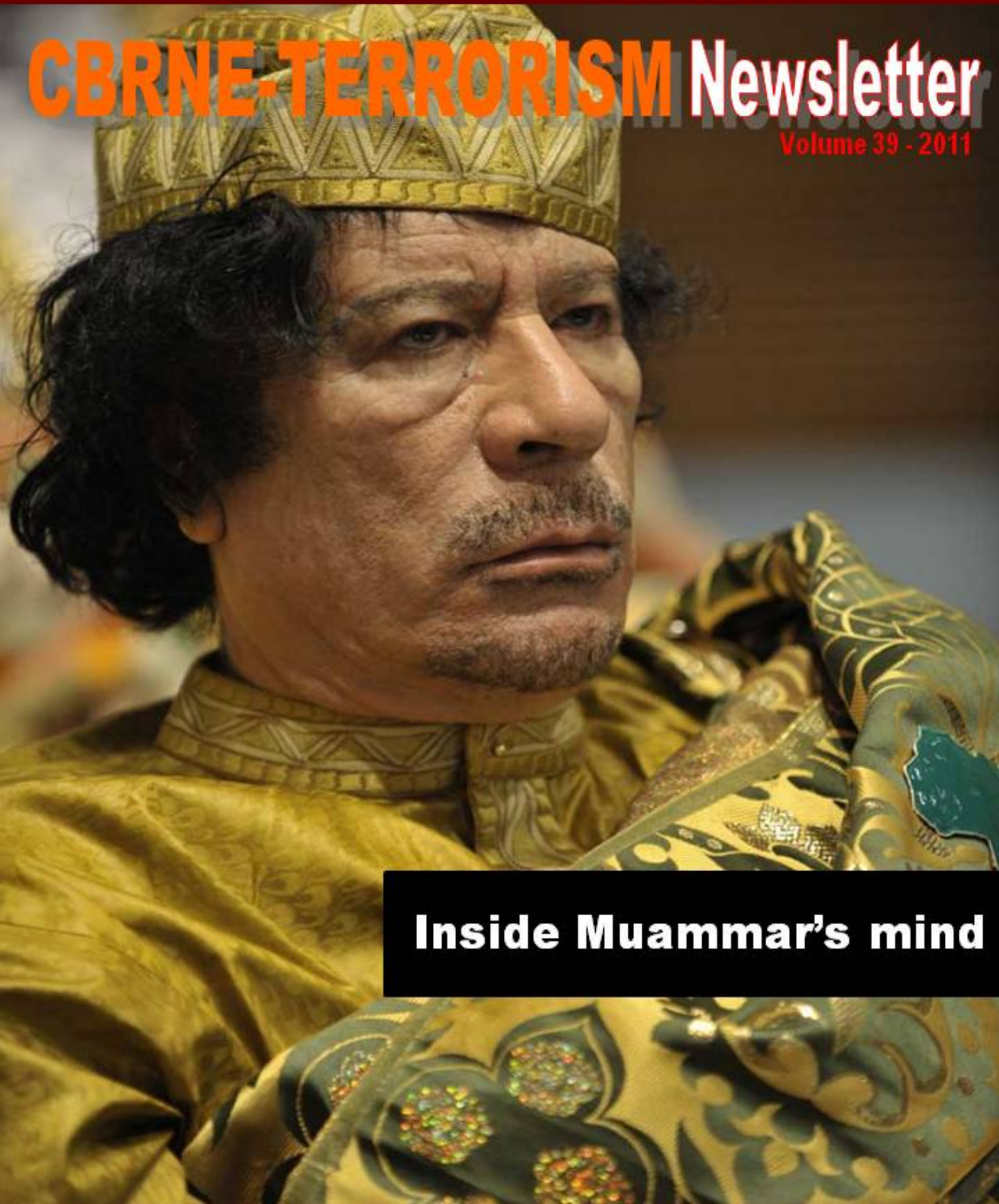


**Muammar Gaddafi – End of a dictator?**

# **CBRNE-TERRORISM Newsletter**

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**Inside Muammar's mind**

**[www.cbrne-terrorism-newsletter.com](http://www.cbrne-terrorism-newsletter.com)**

## Gaddafi: "Hundreds of Libyans will martyr in Europe"

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8627076/Libya-Cold-Gaddafi-threatens-to-launch-attacks-on-Europe.html>

This is not the first time Gaddafi is threatening Europe. Last week (July 2011) he threatened that European civilians will become legitimate targets. "Hundreds of Libyans will martyr in Europe. I told you



it is eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth. But we will give them a chance to come to their senses," the Libyan leader said in an audio speech carried on Libyan television.

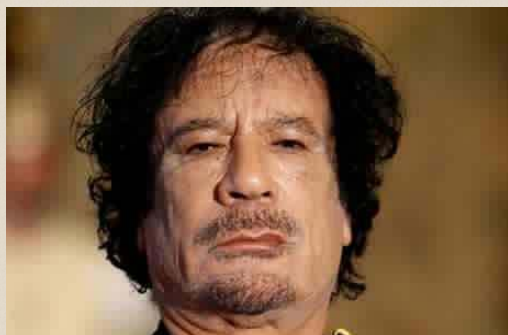
Gaddafi, whose forces have been battling rebel fighters increasingly encroaching on his territory and NATO warplanes, was speaking in the desert town of Sabha, 500 miles south of Tripoli. The speech, to a crowd of about 50,000

people, appeared designed to show that Gaddafi still enjoys support in areas of Libya he still controls. "You will regret it, NATO, when the war moves to Europe," he said, adding that the Canary Islands, Sicily, other Mediterranean islands as well as Andalusia in southern Spain were Arab lands that should be liberated.

## Deconstructing Delusional Dictators. What is Gaddafi's psychological profile?

Source: <http://amirmizroch.com/2011/03/01/deconstructing-gaddafi-what-is-his-psychological-profile/>

What is Gaddafi's mental profile? By just a cursory look at his interviews and quotes, and the way he speaks, the Libyan dictator seems to be suffering from narcissistic rage and



paranoid delusions. But despite this apparent handicap, the Colonel seems to be extremely adept at holding onto power, consolidating his resources and running his security forces. His sons are extremely loyal thus far, and, so it seems, are his top generals and security chiefs. He must be an able politician to keep his close circle loyal – even if he does so through threats.

I've searched the net and have found very little open-source material on Libyan dictator

Muammar Gaddafi's psychological profile. Would love any input from readers/ experts in this field. Any psychologists ready to take a crack at 'deconstructing Gaddafi'?

I'm not a psychologist, but Gaddafi seems to me like he has a serious case of narcissism, and an extreme form of delusion. Absolute power for over 40 years seems to have corrupted his mind absolutely. His slow speech, his off-handed disregard for the true reality around him and his rage are probable symptoms of a serious mental condition. Like a true narcissist, Gaddafi says all Libyans love him, and that any talk of the use of force by his troops against civilians is a lie: he would never hurt the people that love him. "All my people are with me, they love me all, they will die to protect me," he tells the BBC, (BBC News – Full interview with Col Gaddafi <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12607478>) while Human Rights Watch says over 1,000 people have been killed in the pro-democracy uprising so far.

Like a true narcissist suffering from paranoid delusions, he believes that his former friends in the "war on terror" [Western powers] "betraye"



him and have left him to fend for himself against al-Qaida, who is trying to take over his country. He is convinced that Qaida is trying to bring him down, for it cannot be possible for a narcissist such as him to countenance the possibility that his own people don't love him, that he is not loved absolutely by everyone. For over 40 years, Gaddafi's portraits have graced every possible wall in Libya. In his mind, his people love him as much as he loves himself, perhaps even more. Faced with a crumbling reality, Gaddafi must reinforce his belief that the uprising is being driven by outside forces, and that his people continue to adore him.

As if carrying out an act of what psychologists call transference, Gaddafi accuses his opponents of being on hallucinatory drugs, while to the objective observer, this turbaned, sunglass-wearing dictator is the one who looks like he's on something.

In 1976 then Egyptian President Anwar Sadat called Gaddafi the "the lunatic of Libya," but the CIA, TIME Magazine reported at the time, commissioned a secret psychological profile, which suggested that he was sound of mind.

A mental health professional. Andrew Page writes on Gaddafi:

*"Gaddafi's speech offered the world a curious insight into the psychological make-up of this most eccentric of dictators. His mental health is becoming increasingly fragile and any semblance of statesmanship Gaddafi had gained in recent years has evaporated in the last few days. Here is a man whose self-delusion is fuelling a dangerous paranoia and whose actions are determined by irrational responses rather than reason. At times during his lengthy speech he appeared thought disordered, his speech pressured. But what is most concerning is that Gaddafi has limited or no insight into his psychological condition and – if allowed – would act on his delusions and paranoia with catastrophic effect."*

## The psychology of a deluded dictator

By Andrew Page

Source: <http://scottish-liberal.blogspot.com/2011/02/psychology-of-deluded-dictator.html>

I was deeply disturbed, and at times horrified, by Muammar Gaddafi's defiant speech yesterday. My ten years' experience in working in mental health further reinforced my fears that this unstable despot is not bound by moral boundaries and may well do anything to cling on to power.

Stephen Fry tweeted that "Gaddafi appears to have separated himself from any semblance of reality, which would be funny if it didn't mean slaughter, pain and horror". SNP Blogger Lallands Peat Worrier also reflected that "this is an object lesson in fucknuttery. A technical term..." Not a term I would generally have used in my professional life but I fully endorse the sentiment.

His speech was disturbing on many levels and was even more chilling than his son's threat to "fight to the last bullet". During a one hour rant, he claimed he will go down fighting and "die a martyr". His martyr complex is concerning

enough. But his speech was also littered with faintly veiled threats: the people of Benghazi were warned "just wait until the police return to restore order", while he also promised that "any use of force against the authority of the state shall be punished by death". He denied that violence had broken out yet, which presumably means that, in his own mind, the bloodshed the world is witnessing on YouTube is simply the product of an Islamic conspiracy.

Gaddafi clearly believes his own rhetoric, and lacks any insight into either the new political reality or his own psychological instability. Presumably, Gaddafi's speech was intended to signal defiance and aimed at intimidating his opponents, but it unlikely to have had that effect. Instead, he looks like a joke figure, convinced of his own worth to the very people who are calling for his deposition. He is erratic, bizarre, irrational and evidently unstable – and only slightly less paranoid than King Herod. All this would normally inspire sympathy, were it



not for the fact that his murderous intentions reflect those of the Biblical king.

He expressed paranoid delusions about his enemies who he described as "rats who have taken tablets" or "agents of Bin Laden". America, the UK and the BBC were enemies who were undermining Libya from outside. Foreign powers, he claimed, were attempting to poison him. There was little coherence to his disjointed ramblings – but his brutal motivations were clear. "Your children will die" he threatened chillingly. Enemies of the state deserve the death penalty, he claimed. Gaddafi also appears to have a god complex, thinking himself to be semi-divine. He indulged in religious imagery to make his threats, condemning his opponents to hell and damnation.

Gaddafi considers himself to be above the rest of humanity, being God's chosen leader for Libya. Referring to himself in the third person (a classic symptom of some psychotic disorders), he reinforced the concept of his being a semi-divine leader, stating that "Gaddafi is the glory" and that he could not resign but would continue to lead Libya "until the last drop of my blood with the Libyan people is behind me". Perhaps that isn't too long in the offing. His delusions of personal significance were further evidenced in his apparent belief that he has a personal following across the Arab world and would be able to "call on millions from one desert to another to cleanse Libya" - whether he has even a modicum of respect outside Libya is an issue of some debate.

Gaddafi explained that Libya is a world leader. "No-one can stop this historic march" he roared. On that count at least I hope he is right. The Libyan people have started a brave march towards democracy and it is vital for his country that Gaddafi exits – soon.

It is difficult to know who Gaddafi thought he was communicating with during his hour-long shout at a TV camera. The outside world was not only unimpressed but horrified at the rhetoric of hate and violence. The protesters are unlikely to have been intimidated; in fact, the speech will likely have stiffened their resolve. His own "allies" in government are now alienating him, expressing fears of "genocide".

He now looks increasingly isolated and little more than an Erich Honecker-type figure, an out-of-touch old man desperately clinging on to power.

Gaddafi's speech offered the world a curious insight into the psychological make-up of this most eccentric of dictators. His mental health is becoming increasingly fragile and any semblance of statesmanship Gaddafi had gained in recent years has evaporated in the last few days. Here is a man whose self-delusion is fuelling a dangerous paranoia and whose actions are determined by irrational responses rather than reason. At times during his lengthy speech he appeared thought disordered, his speech pressured. But what is most concerning is that Gaddafi has limited or no insight into his psychological condition and - if allowed - would act on his delusions and paranoia with catastrophic effect.

In conclusion, Gaddafi is a megalomaniac who is essentially suffering from - amongst other things - an extreme narcissism. Some of his more grandiose delusions mean that he is living in isolation from reality, in a parallel universe in which the self takes precedence over his obligations to his people. There is no moral or ethical dimension to his thinking, just a belief in the grandiose self and his God-ordained purpose. He is completely incapable of expressing empathy or compassion for others, and probably equally unable to experience ordinary human feelings.

As such, his psychology is perhaps not too different from other historical dictators, such as Ferdinand Marcos or Nicolae Ceausescu. Where he differs is in his expressed wish to act on his delusions so brutally.

On 23rd January, I blogged on the issue of the Tunisian revolution's potential to inspire democratic protest across North Africa: "I for one would not object too strongly with Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi or Algeria's Abdelaziz Bouteflika suffering the same fate as Ben Ali." I am delighted that the popular move towards democracy appears now to have claimed two of these "strongmen", but our immediate concern must be with the Libyan people, who are not safe from Gaddafi's threats so long as he remains in power.



Unlike Tunisia and Egypt, Libya is a tribal country and Gaddafi retains some support, which might convince him to fight on. Psychopathic leaders need their followers and as long as there remain some devotees, his delusions will be reinforced and he will not appreciate the weak position he is in. But any resistance will ultimately be futile and I can see no way back for Gaddafi. He's lost control of his country as well as his grip on reality. However, he's unlikely to go as peacefully as either Ali or Mubarak and the fear is that he may indulge in one final campaign of bloodshed.

Gaddafi may have indicated that he "will fight until the very end." Libyan people have responded: "so will we." While Gaddafi's demise is to be welcomed, I hope it is not at the cost of more life.

Many questions about Libya's future remain unanswered, but it is certainly true that Gaddafi's demise has been in part due to his flawed psychology. Support for him is rapidly disappearing; I strongly believe that he will be gone before the end of the week and I hope that his murderous and threatening rant will prove to be just that and nothing more.

There must be a role for the international community in supporting Libyans to force Gaddafi from power in such a way as to avoid unnecessary violence. Unlike in Tunisia and Egypt, where it was right to leave the future of those respective countries to their people to

decide, there must be some level of intervention in Libya. A stand has to be taken against Gaddafi's aggression; we can not abandon Libyans to the threats of this unstable dictator. We are not dealing with a rational human being, but an increasingly paranoid and deluded murderer whose scope for committing horrific acts of "retribution" are boundless. Outside help might also be useful in assisting the transfer to democracy in a country with little in the way of a democratic heritage or civil society, although the nature of any new democracy and the process itself must be left to the will of Libyans. There is a difference between assistance (which we should offer) and interference (which should be avoided).

The tide of revolution spreading across North Africa and the Arab world is encouraging - and not only because it is toppling dictators at will. It is also disproving the common misconception upon which Western foreign policy has been based: that the options for government in the Arab world were either autocracy or Islamism. No-one has previously taken the concept of democracy in the Middle East seriously, including those who ostensibly championed it. Whatever happens now, one thing is for sure: the conventional wisdom that democracy and Arabs do not go together has been shattered forever. Middle Eastern governments and the relationships they have with their people and the rest of the world will never again be the same. The world has changed, thanks to the courage and audacity of the pro-democracy revolutionaries.

### Profile: Muammar Gaddafi

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12488278>

Muammar Gaddafi is clinging to power in Libya amid violence and unrest, and the International Criminal Court has issued a warrant for his arrest for crimes against humanity. The BBC's Aidan Lewis profiles the Libyan leader. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi is the longest-serving leader in both Africa and the Arab world, having ruled Libya since he toppled King Idris I in a bloodless coup at the age of 27.

[Col Gaddafi seems to have a fresh outfit for every occasion](#)



Known for his flamboyant dress-sense and gun-toting female body guards, the Libyan leader is also considered a skilled political operator who moved swiftly to bring his country out of diplomatic isolation.



It was in 2003 - after some two decades of pariah status - that Tripoli took responsibility for the bombing of a Pan Am plane over the Scottish town of Lockerbie, paving the way for the UN to lift sanctions.

Months later, Col Gaddafi's regime abandoned efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction, triggering a fuller rapprochement with the West.

**"As a man he is surprisingly philosophical and reflective in his temperament - for an autocrat"**

*Benjamin Barber Political analyst*

That saw him complete a transition from international outcast to accepted, if unpredictable, leader.

"He's unique in his discourse, in his behaviour, in his practice and in his strategy," says Libya analyst Saad Djebbar.

"But he's a shrewd politician, make no mistake about that. He's a political survivor of the first order."

### Bedouin roots

Muammar Gaddafi was born in the desert near Sirte in 1942. In his youth he was an admirer of Egyptian leader and Arab nationalist Gamal Abdel Nasser, taking part in anti-Israel protests during the Suez crisis in 1956.

He first hatched plans to topple the monarchy at military college, and received further army training in Britain before returning to the Libyan city of Benghazi and launching his coup there on 1 September 1969.

He laid out his political philosophy in the 1970s in his Green Book, which charted a home-grown alternative to both socialism and capitalism, combined with aspects of Islam.

In 1977 he invented a system called the "Jamahiriya" or "state of the masses", in which power is meant to be held by thousands of "peoples' committees".

The Libyan leader's singular approach is not limited to political philosophy.

On foreign trips he has set up camp in a luxury Bedouin tent and been accompanied by armed female bodyguards - said to be considered less easily distracted than their male counterparts.

A tent is also used to receive visitors in Libya, where Col Gaddafi sits through meetings or

interviews swishing the air with a horsehair or palm leaf fly-swatter.

### Idiosyncratic

Benjamin Barber, an independent political analyst from the US who has met Col Gaddafi several times recently to discuss Libya's future, says the Libyan leader "sees himself very much as an intellectual".



### Gaddafi hosted world leaders in a Bedouin tent

"As a man he is surprisingly philosophical and reflective in his temperament - for an autocrat," he told the BBC News website.

"I see him very much as a Berber tribesman, somebody who came out of a culture informed by the desert, by the sand, and in some ways very atypical of modern leadership, and that's given him a certain endurance and persistence."

Col Gaddafi has long tried to exert his influence over the region and beyond.

Early on he sent his army into Chad, where it occupied the Aozou Strip in the north of the country in 1973.

In the 1980s, he hosted training camps for rebel groups from across West Africa, including Tuaregs, who are part of the Berber community.

More recently he has led efforts to mediate with Tuareg rebels in Niger and Mali.

The diplomatic community's rejection of Libya centred on Col Gaddafi's backing for a number of militant groups, including the Irish Republican Army and the Palestine Liberation Organisation.



US president Ronald Reagan labelled Libya's leader a "mad dog", and the US responded to Libya's alleged involvement in attacks in Europe with air strikes on Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986.

Col Gaddafi was said to be badly shaken by the bombings, in which his adopted daughter was killed.

Spurned in his efforts to unite the Arab world, from the 1990s Col Gaddafi turned his gaze towards Africa, proposing a "United States" for the continent.

He adopted his dress accordingly, sporting clothes that carried emblems of the African continent or portraits of African leaders.

At the turn of the millennium, with Libya struggling under sanctions, he began to bring his country in from the cold.

In 2003 the turnaround was secured, and five years later Libya reached a final compensation agreement over Lockerbie and other bombings, allowing normal ties with Washington to be restored.

"There will be no more wars, raids, or acts of terrorism," Col Gaddafi said as he celebrated 39 years in power.

### Domestic challenges

At home, the Libyan leader presents himself as the spiritual guide of the nation, overseeing what he says is a version of direct democracy.

In practice, critics say, Col Gaddafi has retained absolute, authoritarian control.

Dissent has been ruthlessly crushed and the media remains under strict government control.

Libya has a law forbidding group activity based on a political ideology opposed to Col Gaddafi's revolution.

The regime has imprisoned hundreds of people for violating the law and sentenced some to death, Human Rights Watch says.

Torture and disappearances have also been reported.

In May 2011, the International Criminal Court's prosecutor, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, sought the arrest of Libyan leader and two others for crimes against humanity.

The prosecutor said that Col Gaddafi bore responsibility for "widespread and systematic attacks" on civilians.

Warrants for the arrest of Col Gaddafi's arrest, his son Saif al-Islam and chief of intelligence Abdullah al-Sanussi were issued in June.

Before the rebellion in Libya began, Col Gaddafi was thought to be preparing the

### GADDAFI TIMELINE



- 1942: Muammar Gaddafi born near Sirte, Libya
- 1969: Seizes power from King Idris in bloodless coup
- 1973: Declares "cultural revolution", with formation of "people's committees"
- 1977: Declares "people's revolution", creating the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah
- 1986: US soldiers targeted in Berlin disco attack, three killed; US bombs Tripoli and Benghazi, killing dozens
- 1988: 270 people killed in bombing of Pan Am jet over Lockerbie
- 1992: UN imposes sanctions to pressure Libya into handing over Lockerbie bombing suspects
- 1999: Lockerbie suspects handed over; UN sanctions suspended
- 2003: Libya takes responsibility for Lockerbie, renounces weapons of mass destruction
- 2008: Libya and US sign compensation deal for bombings by both sides
- 2009: Lockerbie bomber freed

ground for a transition.

But it remained unclear who might succeed such a dominant figure.

Speculation focused on one of his sons, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, who built up an image as a modernising, reformist mediator with the West.

That image, as well as any hope of a peaceful transition, rapidly disappeared from view as the Gaddafi family closed ranks in the face of the uprising.



## The Art of Face Reading

### Gaddafi – a psychological profile

Source: <http://www.saffronlidge.com/blog/?p=71>

Gaddafi's face has become gradually more



trapezoid in shape over the years, showing his increasingly despotic and dictatorial tendencies. His jaw has widened while his forehead remains narrow, so he has set opinions and convictions without the intellectual rigour needed to analyse and evaluate his own beliefs – without such a capacity for insight, he is a blinkered and self-delusional adversary.

His jaw is also set, with his lower teeth bared when he speaks, revealing an aggressive and assertive nature. This has become more prominent over the years. Where once he had passion in his eyes and a more natural smile, these days he just looks hunted and defensive. This is corroborated by the deep lines etched between his eyebrows: he is an intolerant and impatient man. Jowls are also a sign of him becoming increasingly controlling and set in his ways.

Interestingly, he has deep lines running under his eyes too, which indicate that he feels the loss of something – or someone – acutely. He finds it hard to let go, or to express deeper grief. It is also a sign of long-term fear.

He has a broad, strong chin, so is stubborn – a trait that's magnified by his heavy brow. His ears are large, denoting a strong constitution and an ability to take risks. He is not one to fade away or give up easily – as he has proved many times over. His broad and long nose also

shows the size of his ego, ambition and immense sense of self-importance. Materialistic and power-seeking, he demands absolute obedience and loyalty.

At a critical time in his late teens, he was expelled from school, which cemented his drive for subversion and revolution. He may have held more straightforwardly passionate beliefs in those early days – and was even talked of as charismatic, but his eyes these days display a disturbingly hard glint and maniacal disposition. He is clearly mentally unstable, as many commentators have observed. His mouth has a cruel curve to the upper lip, too, and with his small eyes, his face indicates a large capacity for cruelty and lack of feeling for others. Curiously, his eyes are very lidded. This is partly a sign of someone who has accumulated wealth and assets, but it also demonstrates a self-critical streak. He may secretly be hard on himself as well as those around him. His eyes are hooded, so he is regularly deludes, or "hoodwinks" himself.

The fleshiness of his face indicates that he measures his success by his material assets and power. I suspect that a fear of losing all that he has led himself to believe he is – and losing the wealth he has accumulated, more than anything, drive him to cling on so desperately to his position. Without these, in his own eyes, he is nothing. His greed is no doubt connected to his desire to distance himself from his parents' poor and humble background. The left side of his face has a more proud aspect, so he has inherited aloofness and arrogance from his father; the right side shows an intensity inherited from his mother.

Having built his image on his status and accumulated wealth rather than on humanitarian ideals or worthy personal traits, he is now desperately fragile and insecure – exposed for the bully he is. Now that he is losing his grip and his supporters, his leadership feels hollow, and he is fighting the inner realisation that he is nothing without his title and that there is no lasting satisfaction from having achieved authority through force and abuse of power.





## The Psychology of Dictatorship: Why Gaddafi Clings to Power

By John Cloud

Source: <http://healthland.time.com/2011/05/26/the-psychology-of-dictatorship-why-gaddafi-clings-to-power/#ixzz1Rg6xK02u>

Muammar Gaddafi continues to hold tightly to power even as NATO bombs rain down on Tripoli. Syrian autocrat Bashar al-Assad has killed more than 1,000 of his own people in an effort to quash protests. In Yemen, President Ali Abdullah Saleh has refused to step down despite months of unrest that has intensified into near civil war this week. The question is, why do all these guys fight so hard to keep power? Why not decamp to Saudi Arabia or Venezuela and live out their lives in luxury before being killed or held for trial like Hosni Mubarak?



[Muammar Gaddafi gestures as he speaks at a Tripoli hotel in this still image from a video by Libyan TV released May 11, 2011](#)  
[REUTERS/Libyan TV via Reuters TV](#)

Any attempt to diagnose a defining psychological feature of dictatorship would be facile. But in the public record available on many of them — Stalin and Mao, Saddam Hussein and Gaddafi himself — one can begin to see patterns that shape a dictatorial personality. At least since the Office of Strategic Services (now known as the Central Intelligence Agency) commissioned a secret profile called "A Psychological Analysis of Adolf Hitler," which was issued in 1943, psychologists have sought an explanation for the authoritarian mind. New research has brought us closer than ever to understanding how leaders become despots.

There are at least three explanations for dictatorial behavior:

### 1. Dictators are psychopaths.

This is the simplest and most seductive psychological explanation of dictatorship. It's also the least helpful. Psychopathy is defined in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders under the rather antiseptic term "antisocial personality disorder." Its features are, among others, "repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest," deceitfulness, impulsivity and lack of remorse.

It's difficult to think of a dictator who hasn't exhibited these traits. For instance, dictators not only lie to others as a matter of course but also lie to themselves. "If ever [Stalin] called somebody a traitor, it was not only the minds of others he was manipulating," writes Oxford historian Robert Service in his biography of the dictator. Similarly, Gaddafi truly seems to believe not only that opposition to his regime equals opposition to the very existence of Libya but that, as he has said shortly after the uprising began, "All my people are with me. They will die to protect me."

But true psychopaths — think of serial killer John Wayne Gacy — are not only liars and remorseless killers, but they seem to lack any feelings whatsoever. Gacy used various tools to torture his victims over hours — reviving them after they passed out — before finally showing the mercy of murder. Most dictators don't carry out such brutalities, at least not in person.

Scott Atran is a University of Michigan psychologist who has studied strongmen around the world for two decades. He has spoken with Khaled Meshaal of Hamas; Abubakar Ba'asyir, erstwhile emir of the Southeast Asian militant group Jemaah Islamiyah; Hafiz Saeed of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the terrorist group that operates from Pakistan; and William Pierce, the late leader of the white-supremacist movement in the U.S. None of these stateless men can accurately be described as dictators, but all have led



organizations that valorize a muscular and often brutal leadership style.

Atran's main conclusion is that an impulse toward morality, not sadism or greed, drives the strongman personality. Hitler, he points out, refused the contemporary equivalent of hundreds of millions of dollars in payoffs to reclassify a small group of Jewish Austrians as non-Jews. Similarly, Atran and his team have recently published papers mounting evidence that the Iranian regime ignores substantial offers of aid to end its nuclear program out of a "sacred value" of independence that trumps the practical concerns of its people.

## 2. Dictators are paranoid narcissists.

Most non-dictatorial leaders employ subordinates who are empowered to question them. Dictators arrange their lives so that no one can play this role. "What strikes me is not so much the intrinsic psychopathy of some of these leaders but, rather, how absolute power changed them over time," said Frank Dikotter in an e-mail. Dikotter is a professor at the University of Hong Kong and author of *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe*. "Mao was in power for a long time, and abuses got worse and worse. In the end, he lived in his own cocoon." Dictators also lose their ability to see themselves and their relationships to others realistically. In a 2003 paper in the journal *Psychological Review*, three researchers led by Dacher Keltner of the University of California, Berkeley, looked at how elevated power changes the psychological makeup of those who have it. They found that powerful people become more willing to take credit for accomplishments they didn't achieve. They also begin to see the world around them in "more automatic, simplistic ways."

But there is a neurological cost to ignoring the realities around us. Like any neurological region, the paralimbic cortex, where our emotions are processed and where our sense of self-control lies, can stop functioning properly if it's not regularly used. Gaddafi deployed hundreds or thousands of agents who identified threats to his power and eliminate them. In this he is similar to Stalin, whose security commissariat, the NKVD, moved against whole swaths of Soviet society that might oppose him, particularly pre-revolutionary elites. By muzzling any truthful criticism opposition, dictators begin to inhibit

their own paralimbic systems, which is one reason they start to sound so crazy in their latter years.

Saddam Hussein is a good example, according to Renana Brooks, a Washington psychologist who specializes in power and domination. Hussein refused to stop lying about whether he had weapons of mass destruction even as bombers readied their approach to Baghdad. "Dictators are willing to create a fantasy of their personal power," says Brooks. "They see themselves as heroic." When that sense of heroism is challenged, they become paranoid.

## 3. Dictators are more or less normal people who develop mental disorders in the extraordinary circumstance of holding absolute power.

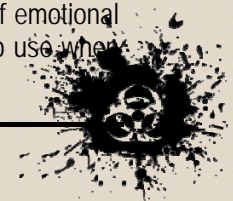
Zimbabwe's despot, Robert Mugabe, was apparently a polite ascetic as a young man. As Peter Godwin points out in his definitive 2010 book *The Fear: Robert Mugabe and the Martyrdom of Zimbabwe*, former aides say that when Mugabe was younger, he wasn't a wild-eyed tyrant but a careful listener who rose early, did his push-ups and never drank.

How does such a man become a monster? At this point, it's tempting to invoke Lord Acton and say that absolute power corrupted Mugabe. But how, exactly? What is the mechanism by which power corrupts?

In a new paper called "How Power Corrupts," a Columbia University team of psychologists suggest that power doesn't change the psychology of powerful people but, rather, their physiology. Lead author Dana Carney and her team hypothesize that because power eases so many daily stressors — dictators never have to worry about driving a car or paying a mortgage — powerful people show persistently lower levels of cortisol, a hormone closely associated with stress.

Typically, immoral behavior — even routine sins like lying — is stressful. "A lie-teller must actively inhibit and suppress many things including: the truth, internal monitoring of [his or her] moral compass, social norms, fear of consequence, and consideration of others' interests," Carney and her colleagues write. "This suppression leads to negative emotions, decrements in mental function, and physiological stress."

But because they have lower levels of cortisol, "the powerful have an abundance of emotional and cognitive resources available to use when



navigating stressors as they arise." In this way, dictators may become immune to regret. When the Columbia team tested their hypothesis in a lab setting, they found that study participants who were placed in large offices and informed they were managers made difficult decisions much more easily than those given the role of subordinates. Not only did the high-power group score lower on psychological measures of stress; they also had lower levels of cortisol in saliva samples.

None of this means we can excuse dictators for their crimes. But our brains simply weren't designed to wield absolute power. Dictators may fight to the end because they don't understand that any end is possible. Gaddafi should stand down before he loses everything; Mubarak should have left Egypt weeks before he resigned; Hitler could have brokered for peace; Saddam Hussein could have bargained for his life. But dictators are too strong militarily and too weak psychologically to bargain. That's why they invite annihilation.

*John Cloud is a senior writer at TIME and TIME.com. He writes the Lab Rat column and covers psychology for Healthland.*

### My Years As Gaddafi's Nurse

Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/04/10/my-years-as-gaddafi-s-nurse.html>

I checked the dictator's heart and lived in luxury. But when revolution came, I realized the cost.



Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi's former nurse, 24-year-old Oksana Balinskaya, at her home in central Ukraine., Joseph Sywenkyj for Newsweek

I was just 21 when I went to work for Muammar Gaddafi. Like the other young women he hired as nurses, I had grown up in Ukraine. I didn't speak a word of Arabic, didn't even know the difference between Lebanon and Libya. But "Papik," as we nicknamed him—it means "little father" in Russian—was always more than generous to us. I had everything I could dream of: a furnished two-bedroom apartment, a

driver who appeared whenever I called. But my apartment was bugged, and my personal life was watched closely.

For the first three months I wasn't allowed to go to the palace. I think Papik was afraid that his wife, Safia, would get jealous. But soon I began to attend to him regularly. The job of the nurses was to see that our employer stayed in great shape—in fact, he had the heart rate and blood



pressure of a much younger man. We insisted that he wear gloves on visits to Chad and Mali to protect him against tropical diseases. We made sure that he took his daily walks around the paths of his residence, got his vaccinations, and had his blood pressure checked on time. The Ukrainian press called us Gaddafi's harem. That's nonsense. None of us nurses was ever his lover; the only time we ever touched him was to take his blood pressure. The truth is that Papik was much more discreet

though! That's just a myth. He only used the tent for official meetings.

We traveled in great style. I accompanied Papik to the United States, Italy, Portugal, and Venezuela, and whenever he was in a good mood, he asked us if we had everything we needed. We would get bonuses to go shopping. And -every year Papik gave all his staff gold watches with his picture on them. Just showing that watch in Libya would open any door, solve any problem that we had.



than his friend, the womanizer Silvio Berlusconi. Gaddafi chose to hire only attractive Ukrainian women, most probably for our looks. He just liked to be surrounded by beautiful things and people. He had first picked me from a line of candidates after shaking my hand and looking me in the eye. Later I learned he made all his decisions about people at the first handshake. He is a great psychologist.

Papik had some odd habits. He liked to listen to Arab music on an old cassette player, and he would change his clothes several times a day. He was so obsessive about his outfits that he reminded me of a rock star from the 1980s. Sometimes when his guests were already waiting for him, he would go back to his room and change his clothes again, perhaps into his favorite white suit. When we drove around poor African countries he would fling money and candy out the widow of his armored limousine to children who ran after our motorcade; he didn't want them close for fear of catching diseases from them. He never slept in a tent,

I got the impression that at least half the population of Libya disliked Papik. The local medical staff was jealous of us because we made three times more than they did—over \$3,000 a month. It was obvious that Papik made all the decisions in his country. He is like Stalin; he has all the power and all the luxury, all for himself. When I first saw television pictures of the Egyptian revolution I thought, nobody would ever dare to rise against our Papik. But there was a chain reaction after Tunisia and Egypt. If Papik had passed his throne to his son Saif when he still had a chance, I believe that everything would have been all right. People would not be dying right now.

I got out of Tripoli at the beginning of February, just in time. Two of my friends stayed behind, and now they can't leave. I had a very personal reason for wanting to get out: I was four months pregnant, and I was beginning to show. I feared that Papik would not approve of my Serbian boyfriend.



Papik will probably never forgive me my betrayal. But I realize I did the right thing to flee Libya. My friends all told me I should think of my future baby and run. Now Papik's closest

partners are also running from him. And he is forcing his children and our two remaining Ukrainian colleagues to stay and die by his side.

*As told to NEWSWEEK's Anna Nemtsova in Mogilnoye, Ukraine.*

### Psychology of Clothes Case Study: Gaddafi

Source: <http://beyondanomie.wordpress.com/2011/02/23/psychology-of-clothes-case-study-gaddafi/>

With Col. Gaddafi's rambling and incoherent speech yesterday, Libya's political situation sinks ever deeper into tragic farce. The final outcome is not yet clear, but the shambolic figure under the giant white umbrella of two days ago and the haggard figure of yesterday's speech are images of a dictator in decline.



Contrast them with these historical images taken from an article written in September 2010.



Like many potentates, Gaddafi is fond of ostentatious ornamentation.

Dictators often use flamboyant clothes to project an image of wealth, power, and superiority. Gaddafi's grandiose razzle-dazzle was used to awe and impress his own population and convince foreign powers of his dominance over that same population.

When in vibrantly-coloured traditional dress, he affected the well-off Man of the People image beloved of all dictators who prefer not to look at their real oppressive selves in the mirror. In military garb, he saw himself as a Strong Man, able to exert his will over others. And when in more Western – if eccentric – garb, Gaddafi

fancied himself an Independently-Minded World Statesman with pretensions of influencing the Great Powers of the globe.

Always been an unstable and eccentric presence, prone to mood swings and impulsive behaviour, he is now swathed in drably-coloured clothes. With the oversized umbrella held cautiously over his head, he seems visibly shrunken. A man who wears his heart on his sleeve, the outfits of the past couple of days aptly confirm the image of a man under pressure, who feels power slipping out of his control.

### Is Muammar Gaddafi mentally ill?

Source: [http://www.health24.com/news/Mind\\_Psychology/1-930,61416.asp](http://www.health24.com/news/Mind_Psychology/1-930,61416.asp)

It may have become acceptable to question Muammar Gaddafi's state of mind but it's a



futile exercise to try to predict his behaviour.

Psychiatrists and mental health experts say they are often called upon to diagnose from afar -

a call driven by society's desire to come to grips with bad situations.

Yet whether the subjects are dictators or "brotherly leaders," as Libya's leader portrays himself, the minds of men like Gaddafi are unique and therefore uniquely unpredictable. "What people try to do is to achieve some kind of typology," said Nigel Eastman, a professor of psychiatry at St George's, University of London.

#### Gaddafi not acting 'normal'

"When individuals behave outside of what we think of as our normal box, in ways that threaten or harm others, we find it so incredible that we need to try to find a way of understanding it. But the leap from feeling we need to understand them to achieving a valid understanding is an impossible leap."

Few would dispute that Gaddafi's behaviour has at times gone beyond normal.

At least a thousand people are thought to have been killed in his attempts to crush a popular revolt and he has accused the protesters who

rose up against him of being fuelled by milk and Nescafe spiked with hallucinogenic drugs.

His penchant for female bodyguards and bedouin tents is eye catching, but his readiness to execute his opponents shifts that quirkiness into an extreme behaviour bracket. "Clearly he is a very strange and evil man," Eastman said.

The United States once branded Gaddafi a "mad dog" for his support of militant groups worldwide and on the streets of opposition stronghold Benghazi there is currently no shortage of people calling him "crazy" or "insane". Some of those who have recently been closest to him now also describe him as a "madman".

#### The calm before the storm?

Yet in interviews with the BBC and ABC this week, some commentators said the 68-year-old Libyan leader appeared quite lucid. On Libyan TV Wednesday he was pictured surrounded by supporters chanting: "You will remain great."

Libyan Deputy UN Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi last week predicted Gaddafi would either die fighting or commit suicide rather than be forced out of power. Since he has few other options, analysts suggest this may well prove true.

Kingsley Norton, an expert on personality disorders at the West London Mental Health Trust (WLMHT), said calmness can sometimes be a sign that someone is certain about the end game.



"People under pressure become apparently calm when they have some inner certainty about their own fate, which might derive from deeply-held religious belief or from the fact they have a 'plan B,' such as suicide or escape to safe haven," he said.

#### **Not helping stigma of mental illness**

Michael Phelan, a WLMHT consultant psychiatrist, said that after 41 years in absolute power, surrounded by people who don't dissent, it's hardly surprising if Gaddafi thinks he is infallible.

Yet Phelan and others say the tendency to use mental health labels says more about society's need to find an explanation for certain behaviour than about the perpetrators themselves.

"It's a way of giving ourselves the comfort that we think we know what is going on," said Peter Byrne, director of public education at Britain's Royal College of Psychiatrists. "But the truth is that in terms of local, national or international politics, we really don't know what's going on."

Some mental health experts worry that pinning pseudo-psychological labels on leaders like Gaddafi can undermine the seriousness of their actions, and is also detrimental to genuine sufferers of mental illness. "You see people throwing these diagnoses around based on a

speech or a way of behaviour, but all that does is add to the stigma of mental health," said Phelan.

"If someone does something really heroic, something really irrational that saved lives, you rarely see them described as mad. It's always the bad things that are labelled as being mad."

#### **Difficult to predict what he'll do next**

And as for whether any attempts at psychological analysis help predict what might happen next? Slim chance. Even when there is firm, clinical evidence that someone is mentally disordered, it is extremely difficult to predict how they might react, especially to extreme circumstances. "(In such a situation) the only thing that might predict what's going to happen is how that person has behaved before," said Phelan. "Past behaviour tends to predict the future, and I don't think putting a psychiatric label on it would help in any way." - (Reuters Health, March 2011)



A new beginning?

