

Chaos in Libya: How the US-NATO War Destabilized North Africa and Now Threatens Europe

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Libya has been steadily deteriorating politically and economically since the US-NATO invasion of 2011. The South African based News24 reported that a battle had erupted between rebel forces that ousted President Muammar Gaddafi and Islamist militants in the eastern city of Benghazi. Khalifa Haftar (who helped the West remove Gaddafi) and his 'National Army' were seeking to "Purge" Libya of suspected terrorists. There were witnesses and even a reporter from the Agence-France Presse (AFP) who actually saw what happened at the scene.

"The witnesses said a group led by Khalifa Haftar, a former rebel chief in the 2011 uprising that toppled Muammar Gaddafi, was backed by warplanes that pounded a barracks occupied by the Islamist "February 17 Brigade" militia" the report said. "Militiamen responded by opening up with anti-aircraft fire."

Both groups also battled in the Sidi Fradj area in the south of Benghazi. According to News24

"Haftar's group calls itself the "National Army" and a spokesperson for the force, Mohammed Al-Hijazi, told a local broadcaster it has launched "a large-scale operation to flush terrorist groups out of Benghazi". Interestingly, the Chief of Staff of the army Abdessalem Jadallah al-Salihin "denied the force was involved in clashes in Benghazi."

So who does Khalifa Haftar represent? *"In a statement on national television, Salihin called on "the army and revolutionaries to oppose any armed group that tries to control Benghazi by force of arms". It confirms that Libya is in a chaotic situation. Many former soldiers have joined the 'National Army' after constant attacks by various militias and elements of Al-Qaeda since the US-NATO invasion had ended.*

The Libyan government currently in power has seen constant violence against its security forces, government officials and even foreigners since the Obama administration ordered "regime change" in the North African country. The intervention in Libya began when President Obama declared *"Today I authorized the Armed Forces of the United States to begin a limited military action in Libya in support of an international effort to protect Libyan civilians" and "In this effort, the United States is acting with a broad coalition that is committed to enforcing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which calls for the protection of the Libyan people."* The Libyan people have been the victims of Western Imperial powers that sought control over oil supplies and other resources.

The European Union should also be concerned that terrorists can launch attacks against its member states as former Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan had warned last month in a report by Al Arabiya News. He said *“Libya is in danger of becoming an Al-Qaeda terror base for attacks targeting European countries like Britain and France”* he also said that *“Libya could be a base for Al-Qaeda for any operation to Italy, to Britain, to France, to Spain, to Morocco, to everywhere. Weapons are everywhere, ammunition is everywhere.”* What would happen if a terrorist attack did occur on European territory, especially when its economy is in decline? With austerity measures imposed on millions of working class people all across Europe, a terrorist attack by al-Qaeda or its affiliates would allow European governments to clamp down on anti-austerity protests in the name of fighting terror. It would be a convenient excuse to do so. Let’s hope it does not go that far.

Reuters also reported that the Pentagon has relocated 200 Marines from Spain to Sicily in case the situation spirals out of control. Reuters stated the Pentagon’s main concern is over the security of its US embassies, but the Libyan government might lose control of its oilfields if the civil war intensifies:

The Pentagon declined to single out any countries but two U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said American concerns were centered squarely on Libya, where armed groups and Islamists refused to disarm after the 2011 ouster of Muammar Gaddafi.”

The report also said that

“The Marines are part of a crisis response unit focused on embassy security created after the attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, on September 11, 2012, which killed U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans

Pentagon spokesman, Colonel Steve Warren said that the Marines can handle other missions besides providing security for US personal as Reuters explained *“Warren stressed that while the Marines were “unquestionably” focused on the protection of embassies, he did not rule out the possibility they could be called upon for a different mission.”* Libya’s civil war has not helped the economy increase oil production due to its relentless infighting between terrorist groups and tribal militias. Libya is one of the main oil exporters to Europe. If the situation worsens, then the US Marines would be ordered to protect the oilfields at any cost. Reuters also released a report on Libya’s oil supply and how the government attempted to increase oil production when it negotiated a deal with protesters:

Libya’s El Feel oilfield has been shut again by protests and the OPEC producer’s El Sharara field remains closed, bringing national oil output down to about 200,000 barrels per day (bpd) – far from the 1.4 million bpd pumped last year. On Monday, the government said it was bringing western oilfields and pipelines back up after reaching a deal with protesters, and output had slowly clawed back to around 300,000 bpd

Rising tensions between the Libyan government, terrorist organizations and local militias has Washington, Brussels and multinational oil corporations concerned. If the Libyan government were to lose control of the oilfields, it would disrupt the EU’s oil supply and

raise prices at the pump. The US and EU's decision to remove Muammar Gaddafi has created a terrorist haven in North Africa. However, Brussels is under Washington's orders, so NATO forces invaded Libya and imposed a new government even though European bureaucrats knew about the political and economic consequences it might have in the future. Since the US-NATO alliance defeated Libyan forces and replaced Gaddafi with the National Transitional Council of Libya, they secured oil exports for Western markets at least for a short period of time. Now internal conflicts for power and economic control are becoming more intense as former rebels and various terrorist groups from Syria and Iraq enter Libya with their own agendas. It creates a dangerous scenario as terrorist organizations expand their operations to other areas of Africa and even possibly Europe.

Brussels obviously knew that there would be consequences of a "humanitarian intervention" in Libya when they collaborated with Washington. They knew how Europe would be affected in the foreseeable future, it was predictable. But they saw political and economic opportunities by removing Gaddafi from power. It is also important to understand that the US and its European partners were also concerned with Gaddafi's plan to launch the gold dinar as a single African currency, a clear threat against the dollar and euro hegemony on the African continent. Brussels may be just following orders, after all Washington was instrumental in the creation of NATO in the first place. Either way, the people on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea will suffer at the expense of Western Imperialism and their reckless foreign policies.

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