

Geostrategic Basis Of Libyan War: Hydrological Warfare and Energy

Death for Libyans; billions for the West

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From oil to water, water-boarding to arms and from gas to reconstruction the war in Libya will rake in billions of dollars for the West. Just how much will trickle down to the people of Libya remains to be seen.

People who think that the West's intervention in Libya is just another oil grab are mistaken. Broadly speaking, for Britain military intervention is mainly about arms, Italy its natural gas, France its water and for the US its counter-terrorism and reconstruction contracts. Spreading democracy and saving the people of Benghazi form merely tangential benefits used to justify these ends.

Lest we forget, Nato's bombardment began because Mr Gaddafi threatened to do to Benghazi what Mr Bashar al-Assad's forces are doing to various Syrian cities and Nato itself is poised to do in Sirte.

"History is a set of lies agreed upon" once remarked Napoleon Bonaparte. If left unchallenged the true motives behind what the French mainstream media have coined "Sarkozy's War" may be lost in the fog of war.

So what makes Libya so important to the West? Any real estate agent could tell you: location. Given that Libya sits atop the strategic intersection of the Mediterranean, African, and Arab worlds, control of the nation, has always been a remarkably effective way to project power into these three regions and beyond.

Ever since time immemorial Western control over Libya has been of great importance. After Libyan independence in 1951, US, British and French payments for military basing rights formed the single-largest element of Libyan GDP until oil exports began to flow in 1961.

Nowadays, Mr Sarkozy's interest in Libya lies in a commodity more precious than oil, namely water. It is becoming increasingly accepted that water promises to be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th century: the precious commodity that determines the wealth of nations.

Unlike oil, there are no substitutes, alternatives or stopgaps for water. Nature has decreed that the supply of water is fixed. Meanwhile demand rises inexorably as the world's population increases and enriches itself.. Population growth, climate change, pollution, urbanization and the rapid development of manufacturing industries are relentlessly

combining such that demand for fresh water will outstrip supply by 40 per cent by 2040.

Libya sits on a resource more valuable than oil, the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer, which is an immensely vast underground sea of fresh water. Colonel Gaddafi had cleverly invested \$25 billion in the Great Man-made River Project, a complex 4,000-km long water pipeline buried beneath the desert that could transport two million cubic metres of water a day. Such a monumental water distribution scheme could turn Libya – a nation that is 95 per cent desert – into a food self-sufficient arable oasis.

Today France's global mega-water companies like Suez, Ondeo and Saur, control more than 45 per cent of the world's water market and are rushing to privatize water, already a \$400 billion global business. For these French companies, Libya will be a bonanza. No wonder Le Monde coined it "Sarkozy's War" and had a "Victoire" front page splash when Mr Gaddafi's compound was stormed.

Late last year, the Central Intelligence Agency suspiciously raised the spectre of "future 'hydrological warfare' in which rivers, lakes and aquifers become national security assets to be fought over," or controlled through proxy armies and client states. Regime change in Libya is the first major instance of hydrological warfare.

With the spoils of war from Libya's water market largely reserved for the French, Mr. Cameron is eyeing another market, that of arms.

The subject of the West selling arms to regimes suppressing uprisings remains as wilfully overlooked as an American war crime. Even as The Times of London has just reported that Britain enjoyed a 30 per cent spike in arms sales to regimes in the Middle East during the Arab Spring. Arms sold between February and July jumped to \$101 million, the Times' report says, noting that these include weapons that could be used to suppress domestic protests.

Mr Obama's administration is even more steeped in the controversial arms trade. The US accepts no rival on this front. Over the past decade the US has averaged a staggering \$5.8 billion per year in arms sales with the Middle East.

The very Libyan military hardware that Nato boastfully claims to have downgraded by 90 per cent will need to be rebuilt. US arms companies will gleefully be on hand to arm their proxy regime to the teeth. Libya will be a bonanza for American arms dealers.

American infrastructure contractors will also reap the windfalls of post-war reconstruction. The grim reality is that every bridge, road, rail-link and building that US war-planes bomb will have to be rebuilt and paid for by the Libyan taxpayer.

Even grimmer still is the fact that the approximately \$1.1 billion spent by the US government on bombarding Libya is a drop in the ocean compared to the profit that American contractors stand to make. Many of whom have strong ties to the upper echelons of the military and the Obama administration.

In-fact, more than 70 American companies and individuals have won up to \$8 billion in contracts for work in post-war Iraq and Afghanistan over the last two years, according to a new study by the Center for Public Integrity.

According to the study, nearly 70 per cent of these companies had employees or board

members who either served in or had close ties to the executive branch for Republican and Democratic administrations, for members of Congress of both parties, or at the highest levels of the military.

Therefore, those in the military tasked with minimising 'collateral damage' to property stand to directly profit from less than pinpoint precision. In short, dropping bombs can be profitable.

The recent bombshell revelations of correspondence between the CIA and Libya's security apparatus prove that the US has been outsourcing its torture or "enhanced interrogation" of terror suspects to Libya through the internationally illegal rendition process. These revelations are embarrassing but hardly surprising. Nevertheless, there is little doubt a pliant proxy regime will continue to do America's dirty work.

Last but not least there is oil. Much as the self-righteous West might pretend otherwise, oil is unquestionably a key part of the equation. Libya has the largest oil reserves in Africa and 85 per cent of its exports are to Europe.

Archival footage of Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi surrounded by Mr Gaddafi's female bodyguards, kissing the Libyan strongman's hand at Leonardo Da Vinci airport is indicative of just how important Libya is to Italy.

Libya's oil is especially important to Italy because of its proximity, the ease of its extraction, and the sweetness of its crude. Most refineries in Italy and elsewhere are built to deal with sweet Libyan crude, they cannot easily process the heavier Saudi crude that has recently replaced the Libyan production shortfall.

Libyan natural gas reserves are estimated to be over 52.7 trillion cubic feet and large areas of the country are still to be surveyed. With assured supplies available from Libya, Italy will become less dependent on supplies from Russia, which on the energy front is increasingly flexing its muscles and thumbing its nose at mainland Europe.

Libya has a 1,800km coastline just miles from Italy and porous southern borders with three poor African nations. Therefore, a pliant regime that will stem the flow of asylum seekers and keep the oil and gas flowing is vital for Rome.

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