

Are the US and its Allies Contemplating Another Bombing Campaign against Libya?

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*The US might carry out air strikes again in Libya, but it won't improve the conditions on the ground, says **Abayomi Azikiwe**, editor of the Pan-African News Wire and Global Research author. The US would rather allow Egypt and the UAE to carry out certain aspects of this foreign policy in Libya, he adds.*

Battles between Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS/ISIL) militants and local militia are raging in the Libyan coastal city of Sirte. Fighting over the past week has left up to 200 people dead. The spike in violence comes after Libya's rival government in Tripoli launched an operation to retake the area from Islamic State.

Now Libya's imperialist recognized authority is asking Arab states to help them bomb the jihadists.

Watch this interview with Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of the Pan-African News Wire, over RT worldwide satellite news network.

RT: The US is stepping up its fight against IS in Iraq and Syria. Meanwhile the group has established a new capital in North Africa. Why does IS influence continue to grow and spread in the region and in Libya in particular?

Abayomi Azikiwe: In Libya there is clearly a vacuum politically from the stand point that the country has never recovered from the war of regime change in 2011. So consequently with the current regime split into at least two factions, and of course there are other interests in various regions of the country that do not cooperate. This makes it almost impossible for them to establish any type of stability inside the country.

RT: NATO bombing of Libya back in August 2011 was hailed as a model of successful intervention. We're now seeing the country in chaos with no effective government. How did NATO intervention contribute to the rise of extremism in Libya?

AA: The Pentagon as well as NATO armed extremist organizations that served as a surrogate ground force during the war beginning in February of 2011 and extending to October of the same year, they didn't take into consideration that these are the same interests, the same social elements, they had described as terrorist prior to the war of regime change in Libya. So by empowering extremist organizations you will only come up with a result which you have now. The Jamahiriya system under Gaddafi was destroyed as a result of the massive bombing campaign that took place between March and October of 2011 and at the same

time the CIA and NATO funded, armed and coordinated the armed groups that fought against the Gaddafi government.

RT: The internationally recognized government has called on Arab League states to bomb IS positions in Sirte. How likely do you think that this request would be met?

AA: There have already been airstrikes carried out against various Islamist groups inside of Libya. They have been carried out by the Egyptian air force as well as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). So this will not be a new situation. Also Khalifa Haftar who had resided in the US for almost three decades who had been an asset of the CIA was sent back to Libya during the war of regime change in 2011 and he has of course commandeered aircraft that has also been involved in carrying out airstrikes against their political enemies. So you have Egypt, UAE as well as internal elements that are carrying out airstrikes inside the country. So this complicates the political situation in Libya. The UN recently attempted to broker a peace deal between the government recognized by the West and the other regime in Tripoli, but obviously this is proved to be too little too late.

RT: What are the chances the US will spread its fight against IS to Libya as well?

AA: This is a very interesting question because it is US foreign policy that is responsible for the instability in Libya. The probability of the US carrying out air strikes again in Libya is always there, but at the same time even if they do make this decision it will not in fact improve the conditions on the ground inside this North African state. I believe the US would rather at this point allow Egypt as well as the UAE, who have weapons and aircraft that are manufactured in the US and supplied by Washington, to carry out certain aspects of this foreign policy in Libya and throughout North Africa.

RT: Libya is one of the major oil producers in the region. Should jihadists get their hands on its oil refineries how will this affect the whole situation?

AA: I think the impact will be limited for the simple reason that oil production is way down in Libya because of the internecine conflict that's been going there now all of this year. At the same time there is an international glut in the world petroleum market. If there is a stall in the production of Libyan oil it will have more of an impact domestically than internationally.

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