

Libya: Largest Military Undertaking since the Invasion of Iraq. Towards a Protracted Military Operation

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)
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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)
Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Outright lies by the international media: Bombs and missiles are presented as an instrument of peace and democratization...

This is not a humanitarian operation. The war on Libya opens up a new regional war theater.

There are three distinct war theaters in the Middle East Central Asian region. Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq.

What is unfolding is a fourth US-NATO War Theater in North Africa, with the risk of escalation.

These four war theaters are functionally related, they are part of an integrated US-NATO military agenda.

The bombing of Libya has been on the drawing board of the Pentagon for several years as confirmed by former NATO commander General Wesley Clark.

Operation Odyssey Dawn is acknowledged as the “biggest Western military intervention in the Arab world since the invasion of Iraq began exactly eight years ago.” ([Russia: Stop ‘indiscriminate’ bombing of Libya – Taiwan News Online](#), March 19, 2011).

This war is part of the battle for oil. Libya is among the World’s largest oil economies with approximately 3.5% of global oil reserves, more than twice those of the US.

The underlying objective is to gain control over Libya’s oil and gas reserves under the guise of a humanitarian intervention.

The geopolitical and economic implications of a US-NATO led military intervention directed against Libya are far-reaching.

“Operation Odyssey Dawn ” is part of a broader military agenda in the Middle East and Central Asia which consists in gaining control and corporate ownership over more than sixty percent of the world’s reserves of oil and natural gas, including oil and gas pipeline routes.

With 46.5 billion barrels of proven reserves, (10 times those of Egypt), Libya is the largest oil economy in the African continent followed by Nigeria and Algeria (Oil and Gas Journal). In

contrast, US proven oil reserves are of the order of 20.6 billion barrels (December 2008) according to the Energy Information Administration. [U.S. Crude Oil, Natural Gas, and Natural Gas Liquids Reserves](#)).

Largest Military Undertaking since the Invasion of Iraq

A military operation of this size and magnitude, involving the active participation of several NATO member and partner countries is never improvised. Operation Odyssey Dawn was in the advanced stages of military planning prior to the protest movement in Egypt and Tunisia.

Public opinion was led to believe that the protest movement had spread spontaneously from Tunisia and Egypt to Libya.

The armed insurgency in Eastern Libya is directly supported by foreign powers. Rebel forces in Benghazi immediately hoisted the red, black and green banner with the crescent and star: the flag of the monarchy of King Idris, which symbolized the rule of the former colonial powers. (See Manlio Dinucci, [Libya-When historical memory is erased](#), Global Research, February 28, 2011)

The insurrection was also planned and coordinated with the timing of the military operation. It had been carefully planned months ahead of the protest movement, as part of a covert operation.

US, British special forces were reported to be on the ground “helping the opposition” right from the outset.

What we are dealing with is a military roadmap, a timeline of carefully planned military and intelligence events.



United Nations Complicity

So far, the bombing campaign has resulted in countless civilian casualties, which are either categorized by the media as “collateral damage” or blamed on the Libyan armed forces.

In a bitter irony, the UN Security Council Resolution 1973 grants NATO a mandate “to protect civilians”

Protection of civilians

4. Authorizes Member States that have notified the Secretary-General, acting nationally or through regional organizations or arrangements, and acting in cooperation with the Secretary-General, **to take all necessary measures, notwithstanding paragraph 9 of resolution 1970 (2011), to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, including Benghazi, while excluding a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory**, and requests the Member States concerned to inform the Secretary-General immediately of the measures they take pursuant to the authorization conferred by this paragraph which shall be immediately reported to the Security Council; ([UN Security Council Resolution on Libya: No Fly Zone and Other Measures](#), March 18, 2011)

The UN resolution grants coalition forces *carte blanche* to engage in an all out war against a sovereign country in derogation of international law and in violation of the UN charter. It also serves dominant financial interests: it not only allows the military coalition to bomb a sovereign country, it also allows for the freezing of assets, thereby jeopardizing Libya's financial system.

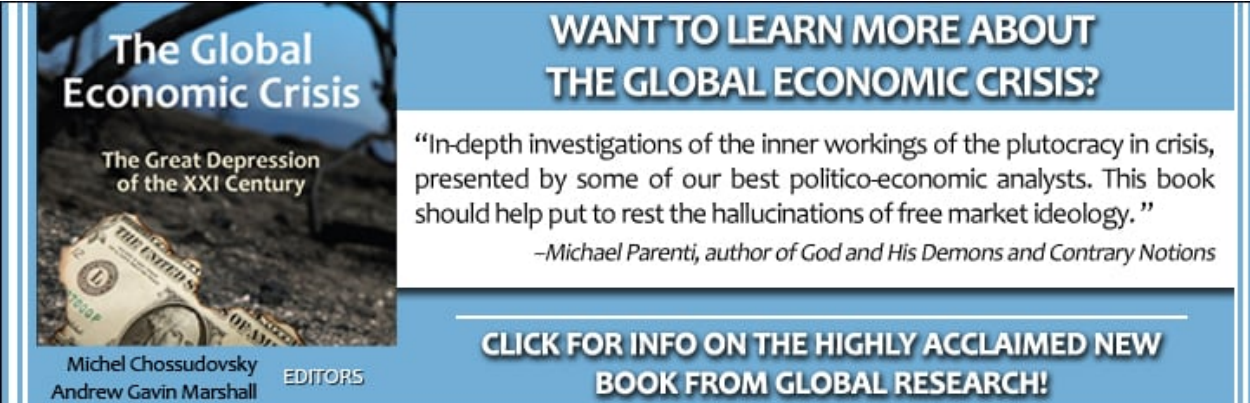
Asset freeze

19. Decides that the asset freeze imposed by paragraph 17, 19, 20 and 21 of resolution 1970 (2011) **shall apply to all funds, other financial assets and economic resources which are on their territories, which are owned or controlled, directly or indirectly, by the Libyan authorities,**

No where in the UNSC resolution is the issue of regime change mentioned. Yet it is understood that opposition forces will receive part of the money confiscated under Article 19 of resolution 1973. In fact discussions with opposition leaders to that effect have already taken place. Its called cooptation and financial fraud:

20. Affirms its determination to ensure that assets frozen pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 1970 (2011) **shall, at a later stage, as soon as possible be made available to and for the benefit of the people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;**

With regard to the "Enforcement of the arms embargo" under para. 13 of the resolution, coalition forces will commit themselves without exception to enforcing an arms embargo on Libya. Yet from outset they have violated Art. 13, by supplying weapons to opposition forces in Benghazi.



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Protracted Military Operation?

Concepts are turned upside down. In an utterly twisted logic. peace, security and protection of the Libyan people, are to be achieved through missile attacks and aerial bombings.

The objective of the military operation is not the protection of civilians but regime change and the break up the country, as in Yugoslavia, namely the partition of Libya into separate countries. The formation of a separate State in the oil producing area of Eastern Libya has been contemplated by Washington for many years.

Barely a week before the onslaught of the bombings,. the director of National intelligence

James Clapper emphasized in a testimony to the US Senate Armed Services Committee that Libya has significant air defense capabilities and that a no fly zone approach could potentially result in a protracted military operation:

Obama's policy is "aimed at the goal of having Gadhafi leave office," the national security adviser reiterated.

But Clapper's testimony underscored how difficult that could be.

He told the Senate committee that he thinks "Gadhafi is in this for the long haul" and that he doesn't think Gadhafi "has any intention ... of leaving."

Later, enumerating his reasons for believing that Gadhafi would prevail, Clapper said that the regime has more military supplies and can count on the army's best trained, "most robustly equipped" units, including the 32nd Brigade, which is commanded by Gadhafi's son, Khamis, and the 9th Brigade.

The bulk of its hardware comprises Russian-made air defenses, artillery, tanks and other vehicles, "and they appear more disciplined about how they treat and repair that equipment," Clapper continued.

Clapper disputed assertions that a no-fly zone could be quickly and easily imposed on Libya, saying Gadhafi commands the Middle East's second largest air defense system after Egypt's.

"They have a lot of Russian equipment, and there is a certain quality in numbers. Some of that equipment has fallen into the oppositionists' hands," he continued.

The system comprises about 31 surface-to-air missile sites and a radar complex that "is focused on protecting the (Mediterranean) coastline where are 80 or 85 percent of the population is," Clapper said. Gadhafi's forces also have "a large, large number" of shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles.

Army Gen. Ronald Burgess, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, endorsed Clapper's assessment, saying momentum was shifting to Gadhafi's forces after initially being with the opposition.

"Whether or not it has fully shifted to Gadhafi's side at this time in-country I think is not clear," Burgess said. "But we have now reached a state of equilibrium where ... the initiative, if you will, may be on the regime side."

Hours after Clapper spoke, Thomas Donilon, Obama's national security adviser, offered a different assessment, suggesting sharply diverging views between the White House and the U.S. intelligence community.

He said the intelligence chiefs' analysis was "static" and "unidimensional," based on the military balance of power, and failing to take into account both Gadhafi's growing isolation and international actions to boost his opponents. ([White House, intel chief split on Libya assessment | McClatchy](#), March 11, 2011)

The foregoing statement suggests that Operation Odyssey Dawn could lead to a protracted drawn out war resulting in significant NATO-US losses.

NATO military setbacks were reported by Libyan sources from the very outset of the air campaign.

Within hours of the commencement of the bombings, Libyan sources (yet to be confirmed) pointed to the shooting down of three French jets. (See Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, [Breaking News: Libyan Hospitals Attacked. Libyan Source: Three French Jets Downed](#), Global Research, March 19, 2011).

The Libyan national TV network announced that a French fighter plane had been shot down near Tripoli. The French Army denied these reports:

“We reject the information that a French fighter plane was shot down in Libya. All the planes we sent on missions today returned to base” said the spokesman of the French Army, colonel Thierry Burkhard, quoted by Le Figaro.” ([Libya: A french fighter plane was shot down! The French Army denies this information](#), xiannet.net March 20, 2011)

Internal Libyan sources (to be confirmed) also reported on Sunday the downing of two Qatari military jets. According to Libyan reports, yet to be confirmed, a total of five French jets have been shot down. Three of these attacking French jets were, according to the reports, shot down in Tripoli. The other two French military jets were shot down while attacking Sirt (Surt/Sirte). (Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya, [Libyan Sources Report Italians Captured. Additional Coalition Jets Downed](#), Global Research, March 20, 2011)

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