

Libya: NATO Acquires Military Outpost In Third Continent

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Libya: Another country for NATO to take root in

Interview conducted John Robles on August 27 with Rick Rozoff, the manager of the Stop NATO website and a Correspondent of Global Research at www.globalresearch.ca

Can you shed a little light on the situation in Libya, in particular with NATO?

As you know, I'm in Chicago, not in Tripoli, so I'm observing events from afar. Yet there is an old Roman expression which says the game is best viewed by the spectator. So, what I have to say I think is trying to situate developments in Libya, whatever they are on the ground, within both a regional and an international context.

And, within that framework, we know that the African Union has refused recognition to the so-called Transitional National Council, consisting of what by all accounts is a fairly motley, heterogeneous grouping of anti-government forces in Libya, aided and abetted by major NATO powers like France, Britain, the U.S. and Italy and by Persian Gulf monarchies like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

So, the fact that the African continent, on which Libya is located, has collectively refused recognition to the new rebel regime is significant, as is the fact that the Russian Foreign Ministry has voiced its concerns and its opposition to any plans that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization may entertain for placing troops on the ground in Libya, ostensibly under the guise of a peacekeeping or stabilization force, but also more prominently voiced some concerns about the prospect of NATO military facilities being authorized by the forces opposed to Gaddafi.

Would you characterize everything that you have heard and seen as a true revolution of the people or is it some sort of a western-backed insurgency in your opinion?

The latter is acknowledged by universal accord, even by those celebrating the apparent overthrow of the government in Libya as a triumph of "people's power" democracy or however they choose to phrase it. What is unquestionable is the fact that, whatever the nature of the rebel coalition is, it would never have succeeded in consolidating support outside of Libya, much less moving into the capital, if it had not been for over 21,000 NATO air missions since March 31 and almost 8,000 combat air sorties in the same period of time. Additionally, more and more information is emanating from sources in Europe, newspapers in Britain and elsewhere, that special operations troops, special forces, from several major

NATO countries, including the CIA which is acting in the streets of Tripoli, are actively involved in combat operations on the ground.

Are they hunting Gaddafi or providing air support for the rebels?

There is no question about both. The intent of United Nations Resolution 1973 adopted in March to “use all means necessary to protect Libyan civilians” had been extended and in essence violated by France, Britain, Italy, the U.S., Canada and other major NATO nations to wage what can only be characterized as a war against the incumbent government in Libya, and this includes, according to NATO’s own statistics, over 21,000 air missions flown over Libya since March 31, of which almost 8,000 are combat sorties. And what is documented even in Western news sources, Western newspapers for example, is that as recently as today Muammar Gaddafi’s hometown has been attacked by NATO warplanes and earlier, a couple of days ago, the major governmental compound in Tripoli was attacked by as many as 64 missiles.

These attacks are coordinated with the military activities of rebel groupings, so that NATO basically bombs them into areas, including the capital and other cities in Libya. The coordination of NATO’s aerial bombing and naval blockade of Libya with rebel forces is unquestionably an act of participation on behalf of one of the belligerent forces against the other – the government of Libya. And in that sense it’s a perfect parallel to what happened in Yugoslavia in 1999, where NATO bombed the country mercilessly for 78 days in coordination and in conjunction with the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army.

You mentioned that some people from Global Research.ca are in Libya, in Tripoli, and they are trapped in a hotel there.

Actually, the international press corps is there. But there are particular concerns about Canadian-based journalist Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya of Global Research and French journalist Thierry Meyssan of the Voltaire Network, who have voiced concerns about their well-being. Their position is very well-known as not parroting the official line of the Western countries, and that information I’m sure has been passed on by establishment Western journalists within the hotel to rebel forces in Tripoli. And there is concern by the two journalists I’ve mentioned that their lives may be in danger.

What do you see as NATO’s role in Libya after Gaddafi is gone?

Time will tell. But assuming previous Yugoslav and Afghan precedents as a likely scenario, we have a lot to go on. We have the fact that the Turkish Foreign Minister announced yesterday that NATO’s role will continue in Libya after the installation of the rebel government, the so-called Transitional National Council.

And similar soundings have emanated from major figures and NATO countries that suggest, far from NATO’s role ending, it may in a certain sense just be beginning. And that parallels almost identically what happened in Yugoslavia in 1999 and what has happened in Afghanistan in the past decade, where NATO bombs itself into a country and sets up military bases and doesn’t leave. The U.S. still maintains Camp Bondsteel in the contested Serbian province of Kosovo, which is a large, expansive base, by some accounts the largest overseas military facility built by the US since the war in Vietnam. And it remains there over 12 years after the end of the 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia.

Similarly, the U.S. has substantially upgraded air bases in Afghanistan, including those bordering Central Asian nations and close to the Iranian border, and there is no indication they are ever going to abandon them, as they are not going to abandon military bases in Iraq and other places. It's a lot easier to bring NATO into one's country or have it forced in than to get it out.

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