

Libya: The Second Anniversary of a Bloody Coup

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Media Disinformation](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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This weekend, marking the second anniversary of the start of protests that would usher in a bloody and prolonged NATO-led coup to overthrow the Libyan Jamahiriya and Muammar Gaddafi, offers many reasons to celebrate for those whose intention was the demolition of Libyan self-determination, African integration, and a domestic system of extensive social welfare and stability. In return, Libyans have won the right to live in fear, as they have won the freedom to be ruled by countless armed despots each engaged in torture, abductions, and persecution of minorities.

In spite of what seems like an unstoppable momentum towards greater strife and social disintegration, romantic imperialists in the West still insist on speaking in the most unwarranted terms of the “street revolution,” that has “brought freedom and hope to millions of people here” ([Globe and Mail, 15/2/2013](#)). In the warm glow of fires that consume others, some among us find reason for a warming self-congratulation. Symbolic of the depth of Western respect for Libya’s “new freedom” is this very statement, from the government of Canada itself, warning Canadian travelers: “[Do not criticize the country, its leadership or religion. Harsh penalties may be imposed.](#)”

The few remaining pro-“revolution” propagandists in the West are not only unwilling to simply state that what they support is globalized regime change and a new colonizing wave that would make non-Western self-determination and sovereignty principles something to be wrecked and thrown aside, they are equally immune to irony. After all, blessed Benghazi, which was to be “saved” at all costs, saved against all else, by Western military intervention is now the same city from which Western interests flee in order to save themselves ([Reuters, 24/1/2013, 31/1/2013, 5/2/2013; The Star, 24/1/2013](#)):

[WESTERNERS SHUN BENGHAZI](#)

Few Westerners live in Benghazi, which has borne the brunt of a wave of violence against diplomats and international bodies, including the killing of U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and a gun attack on the Italian consul’s car this month.

Britain’s recent call to its nationals to leave immediately due to a “specific and imminent” threat to Westerners highlights the insecurity plaguing Benghazi.

The assault on the U.S. mission, for which no arrests were made, grabbed world attention. But there had already been attacks on British, Red Cross and U.N. properties here....

Randy Robinson, principal of British School Benghazi, said: “One of our staff was carjacked. Our residence last spring was robbed with teachers in a room held at gunpoint as thieves cleaned out the apartments. We have to take care.”

Two years ago the anti-Gaddafi uprising had the strongest support in Benghazi but today a very different mood has emerged.

“Most people here would say they are very unhappy,” a local oil worker said.
“Some say they are worse off than before.”

So let’s celebrate the “new Libya,” this “revolution for freedom,” in all of its glory. Let it be an example to others.

Now there is a call from Western media and the usual RAND voices urging NATO to establish a “mission” in Libya ([CSM, 15/2/2013](#)). And if foreign occupation, or foreign boots on the ground were allegedly anathema to the Libyan “revolutionaries,” that too changed well before Gaddafi was overthrown, and is being revived at present: military forces from Italy, and once again from Qatar, have landed in Libya, to help it celebrate its “revolution” ([RT, 13/2/2013](#)).

The thing about authentic, legitimate revolutions these days is that all of their legitimacy comes from external sources and is dropped from the air in explosive 2,000 pound bursts of authenticity. Real revolutions, it would seem, require foreign guardians and can only survive under the tutelage of colonial powers ([Washington Times, 5/2/2013](#)). Beautiful thing then, these revolutions. Sirte, in particular, was rapidly beautified as a result of this revolution:

Once independent, wealthy, and powerfully defiant, today Libyan resources are almost being given away to foreign powers that “mentored” Libya’s revolution. Foreign investors in Libya’s oil sector are being given years of tax exemption, as if they need it; specifically aimed at encouraging Gulf state investors, Libya grants the investor 65% from a project’s value;

“various large scale projects will be given Saudi companies in order to strengthen brotherly ties, remove previous disputes between the two countries, establish a new strategic partnership and benefit from the expertise of Saudi companies. Aarusi also said that all obstacles facing Gulf investors will be overcome...”

and, “last but not least Aarusi said he expected this Saudi company [whose name he refuses to reveal] to be totally in charge of starting up the sugar and cement factories in mid-2013,” whose aim is to export to Europe and Gulf states ([Al Arabiya, 4/2/2013](#)). Along with Gaddafi himself, what the “new Libya” buried in that unmarked grave was resource nationalism and a sense of integrity and dignity in the face of foreign vulture capitalists.

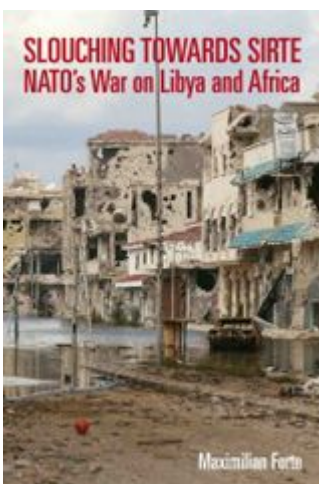
Then there is the IMF, in its newly acquired role of dictating to Libya, another reality permitted by the “street revolution” ([Arabian Business, 6/2/2013](#)). After all, as the IMF’s Christine Lagarde herself has recently said, the “Arab Spring” must be followed by a “Private Sector Spring” ([IMF, 9/1/2013](#)). Libya, formerly a significant actor in international investment, buying up properties and shares of lucrative enterprises across Europe, is now the target of investors ([IMF, 9/1/2013](#)).

The IMF knows when it can take advantage of a situation smelling of ripe disaster: “The budget deficit was 27.0 percent of GDP in 2011, compared to a budget surplus of 16.2 percent in 2010. Similarly, the current account surplus narrowed from 19.8 percent of GDP in 2010 to 1.3 percent in 2011” ([IMF, 4/5/2012](#)). Thus the IMF can now instruct Libya to eliminate universal price subsidies, to reduce public sector wages, and to eliminate

incentives for individuals to seek employment in the public sector: “the recent surge in the public sector payroll to 1.5 million (80 percent of the labor force) will need to be unwound” ([IMF, 4/5/2012](#)).

The IMF has had its sights on Libya from before Gaddafi was overthrown by NATO and NATO’s local neocolonial dependents: days before Gaddafi was murdered, the IMF had a mission on the ground in Libya ([IMF, 20/10/2011](#)) and had previously decreed its recognition of the rebel National Transitional Council as the government of Libya, thrashing international law as the Libyan government under Gaddafi still existed ([IMF, 10/9/2011](#)). But you won’t find Naomi Klein writing the Libyan chapter of the “shock doctrine” ([Gulf News, 26/10/2011](#))—Naomi Klein was too busy [throwing her support](#) behind a Canadian politician, Nathan Cullen, who [voted in support of NATO’s intervention in Libya](#), with little regret. The protection of civilians was paramount, of course, and here is another view of what that protection looked like:

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**[SLOUCHING TOWARDS SIRTE:
NATO’S WAR ON LIBYA AND AFRICA](#)**
by Maximilian Forte

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NATO’s war in Libya was proclaimed as a humanitarian intervention—bombing in the name of “saving lives.” Attempts at diplomacy were stifled. Peace talks were subverted. Libya was barred from representing itself at the UN, where shadowy NGOs and “human rights” groups held full sway in propagating exaggerations, outright falsehoods, and racial fear mongering that served to sanction atrocities and ethnic cleansing in the name of democracy. The rush to war was far speedier than Bush’s invasion of Iraq.

Max Forte has scrutinized the documentary history from before, during, and after the war. He argues that the war on Libya was not about human rights, nor entirely about oil, but

about a larger process of militarizing U.S. relations with Africa. The development of the Pentagon's Africa Command, or AFRICOM, was in fierce competition with Pan-Africanist initiatives such as those spearheaded by Muammar Gaddafi.

Far from the success NATO boasts about or the "high watermark" proclaimed by proponents of the "Responsibility to Protect," this war has left the once prosperous, independent and defiant Libya in ruin, dependency and prolonged civil strife.

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