

Libya: Towards A Politically Divided State

Interview: The recent elections and the murder of US Ambassador Christopher Stevens

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Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya was interviewed by Life Week, a major Chinese magazine based in Beijing. What follows is the English transcript of the interview with Xuxu Jingjing.

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XUXU JINGJING: In your opinion, why did Mustafa Abu Shakour win the election? What is Mustafa Abu Shakour's most important political capital? What do you think about his qualification for the position of Prime Minister?

NAZEMROAYA: Abu Shakour has business ties to the United Arab Emirates and the sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf. He was one of the founders of the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, which is connected to the CIA. He has already served as the Libyan deputy prime minister since November 2011 until his election on September 12, 2012. His selection appears to reflect or complement the election of Mohammed Magarief, a leading figure in the National Front for the Salvation of Libya, as the new president of Libya.

Like Abu Shakour, Magarief also won against a so-called liberal and secular candidate (Ali Zeidan). Both Ali Zeidan and Mahmoud Jibril were key figures in the regime change operations in Libya and the electing of Magarief and Abu Shakour has removed some focus away from them. Zeidan and Jibril, however, along with Ali Tarhouni will have roles in managing the country for the US and its allies. Jibril's coalition holds the most legislative seats in the new Libyan Congress followed by the Libyan branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. While Magarief's party holds only a few. All this has to be kept in mind, because in theory two-thirds of the Libyan Congress needs to support key decisions.

XUXU JINGJING: Mustafa Abu Shakour beat liberal Mahmoud Jibril by 96 votes out of 190. It is quite a narrow win. Will this tense competition cause further political chaos? Why? The political scene in Libya comprises diverse broad camps: nationalists, liberals, Islamists and secularists. How is their respective influence now?

NAZEMROAYA: There are immense political differences in Libya and very petty internal rivalries between members of the same groups. This was clear from the birth of the Transitional Council in Benghazi. In effect this is what the US and its allies wanted in Libya from the start. They wanted a divided opposition to Muammar Gaddafi's government that would only stay united under the control and management of the US, NATO, and the Arab sheikhdoms. The reason for this was that Washington could neutralize any Libyan opposition group that would get out of line by using the others against them. Moreover, if the new

political leaders of Libya refuse to listen to Washington then the Americans can make them fight one another.

From Bosnia to Iraq and Afghanistan, wherever the US goes it deliberately creates a fragile political order that can be manipulated and upset from the outside. This way America can maintain influence over these countries by attempting to hold the balance of power between the rival groups.

XUXU JINGJING: What is influence from foreign countries on the Libyan political process now?

NAZEMROAYA: Libya has turned into a virtual colony now. Many of the Libyans who hoped that things would become better in Libya with regime change realize now that they were wrong and foolish. I think by previous answer addresses this question.

XUXU JINGJING: In your analysis, what are the most important factors harming the country's security and stability?

NAZEMROAYA: The role of the US has been negative in the country, because America wants to keep the different political groups and militias divided. It also wants to prevent the new political leaders of Libya from becoming independent so it is playing them against one another.

I want to add that tensions between Washington and Tel Aviv may be playing out in Libya. The attack on the American consulate in Benghazi may possible be tied to tensions between US President Barak Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Netanyahu wants to get Obama out of office and help Mitt Romney become president. This has led to maneuvers by Israel to embarrass the Obama Administration. Like in Egypt, I also think that rivalries between the royal families in Qatar and Saudi Arabia are a factor of tension between different groups in Libya — the Qatari's support the Muslim Brotherhood while the Saudis support the so-called Salafists.

XUXU JINGJING: Washington's ambassador to Libya and three other Americans were killed during a late Tuesday attack on the US consulate in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi. Who did this is still not clear. In your analysis, will this attack have a continuing and long term affect on US policy on Libya? Will the US put more attention on the country again? Why and how?

NAZEMROAYA: Firstly, the murders of US diplomats in Benghazi are a direct result of the unstable environment that the US has cultivated in Libya. The killings would not have been possible before NATO's war on Libya. The murderers may very well have been America's own allies who fought against Gaddafi.

The US government will use the events to its maximum benefit in Libya. The deployment of more US military personnel to Libya can lead to further militarization of the North Africa country. Washington already has long-term plans of establishing a military foothold in Libya.

You also have to understand that Libyan oil is not only a means of control over the economies of certain European Union countries for the United States government, but it is also strategically important with the cutoff of the modest Syrian oil exports that the European Union was receiving and the much larger and important Iranian oil exports to the European Union.

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