

Neo-Colonial Regime in Libya Faces War Over Oil Exports

Saadi Gaddafi extradited from Niger cannot get fair trial three years after Pentagon-NATO bombings

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On March 19, 2011, the United States and allied NATO war planes began a massive bombing campaign against the North African state of Libya. Under the guise of protecting the lives of civilians, the imperialist war machine was unleashed onto a country of six million people.

Three years later the conditions for working and oppressed people in Libya is back to where it was under the monarchy of King Idris I who was installed by the Italian colonial regime which ruled the oil-rich nation between 1911-1951. Col. Muammar Gaddafi along with the Revolutionary Command Council overthrew the feudal system on September 1, 1969 and proclaimed Libya as a genuinely independent territory in solidarity with oppressed and struggling people throughout the world.

During the period of the Jamahiriya, the political system under Gaddafi after 1977, Libyan development strategies had created the highest standard of living of any other country in Africa. Libya's support for national liberation movements and progressive governments around the world made it a target for successive U.S. administrations from Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan, who bombed Tripoli and Benghazi on April 15, 1986, to the current Obama government which justified the war in 2011 and created the conditions for the brutal assassination of Gaddafi.

Libya was producing 1.6 million barrels of oil per day during the Gaddafi era where today the flow of crude has been reduced to a near trickle. Disgruntled rebel factions and oil workers have shut down the ports in the east of country.

Since mid-2013 the situation has reached crisis proportions with threats by militias based in the eastern region where the counter-revolution against the Jamahiriya began in Feb. 2011. These eastern-based rebels have pledged to export oil without the permission of the U.S.-backed regime in Tripoli, the capital, in the western region of the country.

Prime Minister Ali Zeidan and his weak constituency inside the so-called General National Congress (GNC) parliament do not have control of the strongest militias in the east. Even within the capital itself, the GNC parliament is often invaded and taken over by angry rebels who complain of payless paydays and other conditions prevailing under the existing political dispensation.

North Korean-flagged Tanker Threatened

Exemplifying the oil crisis, a standoff arose at the Es Sider terminal on port Ras Lanuf over the loading of a North Korean-flagged tanker. The Zeidan government in Tripoli warned the rebels at the eastern ports that they would destroy any vessel sailing away from Libya with oil shipments unauthorized by Tripoli.

Reuters news agency reported that “Libya’s parliament has ordered a special force be sent within one week to ‘liberate’ all rebel-held ports in the volatile east, officials said on Monday, raising the stakes over a blockage that has cut off vital oil revenues. The rebels, who have seized three ports and partly control a fourth in the OPEC member country, said they had dispatched forces to deal with any government attack.” (March 10)

One eastern-based militia leader said “We have sent land forces to defend Cyrenaica to the west of Sirte ... and we also have boats patrolling regional waters,” Essam al-Jahani, a member of the rebels’ leadership group, told Reuters. The potential for a full blown military conflict between the forces loyal to the GNC in Tripoli and other western cities and the militias in the east are accelerating.

Later on March 10 another publication reported that a “Spokesperson for the General National Congress (GNC) Omar Hmaiden confirmed to the Libya Herald that the tanker, named Morning Glory, had been intercepted and was now being escorted to Misrata port. A shipping source said the tanker set sail with members of federalist groups operating under Ibrahim Jadhran on board. Morning Glory successfully sailed a few miles away from the coast before there was an exchange of fire with Libyan vessels.” (Libya Herald)

Much speculation has surrounded the North Korean-flagged vessel. It was not clear at the time of this writing whether the tanker was actually owned by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) or another country.

Nonetheless, by emphasizing that the oil tanker was North Korean-flagged the western press could be attempting to justify the aggressive stance taken by the regime based in Tripoli. Washington maintains a hostile position against the DPRK where it conducted joint military exercises recently on its borders with occupied Korea in the South.

Saadi Gaddafi Sent Back to Libya From Niger

Another son of the late Col. Gaddafi was extradited by the French and U.S.-backed regime in Niger. Saadi Gaddafi, a professional soccer player, had taken refuge in Niger in the aftermath of the collapse of his father’s government.

Niger is a major producer of uranium where the facilities are owned by the Areva firm based in France. At present the U.S. maintains a drone station in Niger as well as hundreds of Special Forces.

The Libyan rebel regime in Tripoli says that it will put Gaddafi on trial for alleged crimes committed in Benghazi during the early days of the counter-revolution in 2011. Saadi Gaddafi, unlike his brother, Seif, who is being held by a militia group in Zintan, is not wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Even though the ICC has a warrant out for the arrest of Seif al-Islam, the Netherlands-based entity, which focuses almost exclusively on African leaders, has backed away from any conflict with the GNC regime in Tripoli over the ongoing detention and possible trial of

Gaddafi's oldest son and political successor. Although Seif has been held by the rebels for over two years, he has still not been brought to trial.

Judicial institutions in Libya are virtually non-existent. Violence and targeted assassinations take place frequently without legal redress. Under such circumstances no top leaders of the previous government could get a fair and impartial trial.

The current social and security situation in Libya is a manifestation of the failure of Washington, London and Brussels in their regime-change project for Libya. Having flown 26,000 air missions over Libya between March and October of 2011, and deploying Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives along with Special Forces units from the allied regimes in Egypt and Qatar, these events have resulted in the destruction of any semblance of normality and stability inside the country.

It will take the organized will of the Libyan people to stabilize the country through a revolutionary movement designed to overthrow the U.S.-backed clique in Tripoli and other regions of the country. Several towns and cities in the South of Libya were seized by loyalist forces in recent months that are still committed to the Gaddafi-era form of politics and economics.

Based upon developments in Libya over the last three years it is quite obvious that the imperialist states which engineered the overthrow of the previous Jamahiriya government have no program for the reconstruction and unity of the once prosperous and respected state. Other states from Ukraine and Syria to Venezuela and Cuba are facing similar challenges necessitating a clear anti-imperialist stance on the part of progressive and left organizations based in the western industrialized states.

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