

# The Balkanization of Libya: US-NATO Plans to Carve up Libyan Territory

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## Editor's Note

*Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya was interviewed by Xu Jingjing for a feature article about the impasse in the war on Libya for Life Week, a major Chinese magazine based in Beijing.*

The interview for Life Week discusses the impasse in the war and how it is part of the strategy of the Pentagon and NATO to divide Libya. The interview also discusses the roles of Turkey and Germany as well as E.U. plans to send peacekeepers. The economic importance of Misurata is also emphasised.

What follows is the English transcript of the interview (26 April 2011).

**XU JINGJING:** It seems the Western Coalition has slowed down their moves in the past three weeks. In your analysis, what are the reasons for the impasse?

**NAZEMROAYA:** The impasse in Libya is calculated. The US and NATO want to maintain a strategic stalemate between the Libyan government in Tripoli and the Transitional Council in Benghazi. They are using this strategic stalemate to manipulate both Tripoli and Benghazi. The more desperate and tired both Tripoli and Benghazi become, the more they will turn to the US and its NATO partners to end the conflict. The Transitional Council will also make more deals with the US and the EU. The Libyan regime in Tripoli will plead with the US and the EU to end the war and also make concessions. The US and the EU want the two sides in Benghazi and Tripoli to be dependent on Washington and Brussels as the arbiters of Libya.

The end result will be that Libya will transform itself into what the US and Western Europe want it to become since the end of the Second World War in 1945.

The US and EU goal is to turn Libya into a divided country. This is what the US and the EU are experts at doing. They are experts at turning people against one another and breaking countries.

They divided the Arabs who should be one country or at the most five Arab countries. They helped divide the people of India. They divided the Southern Slavs in the Balkans. They divided the people of Southeast Asia. They have worked to divide the island of Taiwan from mainland China. They worked to make Ukraine fight with Russia. With Israel and Saudi Arabia they divided the Palestinians and Lebanese politically. Now the US and the EU are intent upon further dividing the Arabs as well as creating divisions in the African and South

American countries. And they continue to work to divide the Muslims by identifying them as Shias or Sunnis. They are also working very hard to divide Russia, Iran, and China.

Before 1951, the US, France, Italy, and Britain all had agreements amongst themselves to divide Libya into spheres of influence and even tried to prevent Libya from becoming a united and independent country.

These imperialist powers originally wanted Libya to be three separate territories. The Libyan people bitterly opposed this.

Washington, London, and Paris even held talks with the Soviet Union on establishing three U.N. mandates called trusteeships in Libya. One of these mandates would be in Cyrenaica under British control, another mandate in Fazzan under French control, and one in Tripolitania under Italian control. The US would oversee all of them. But the Soviets had different ideas and wanted a mandate in Tripolitania or to share it with Italy.

Finally no agreements could be made and due to this Libya emerged as an independent country after debate at the UN.

When the US, Britain, France, and Italy agreed to give Libya independence they agreed to do it if Libya became a federal state under King Idris. Idris was made the head of State of Libya by the British and colonial powers and under the federal system the other smaller emirs would run Cyrenaica and Fazzan and would be the unelected representatives of these two territories.

In Tripolitania, which was the area where most of the Libyan population was concentrated, the Libyan representatives would be selected by the people. But under a federal system that gave equal weight to Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fazzan. The Libyan people's selected officials would be turned into a minority amongst the emirs and sheikhs.

In the federal system that Washington wanted, the unelected emirs representing the smaller populations of Cyrenaica and Fazzan would be the majority in the Libyan National Assembly. What the US and its allies were trying to do was to extinguish any form of self-determination by the Libyans. Washington and its partners were trying to turn Libya into a sheikhdom or emirate like Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE.

Today the US and the EU are on the road towards forcing a new federal system in Libya or dividing the country under at least two administrations in Tripoli and Benghazi. These countries are also the forces that are pushing for a tribal conflict in Libya, which would turn the country into a second Yugoslavia. The tribal fighting in Libya would spill outside the borders of Libya into the rest of Africa, from West Africa to Central Africa and East Africa.

**XU JINGJING:** Is political bargaining behind the impasse? In your analysis, how will the countries allot obligations in the war and the interests after the war?

**NAZEMROAYA:** The British have outlined a scheme where the Arab members of this coalition against Libya will send their troops into Libya or finance a massive army of foreign mercenaries.

A partially privatized ground invasion of Libya will take place. In this regard, the British want Arab countries like Qatar and the UAE to finance British and US mercenaries in Libya. Like

the British did in Oman many years ago, London is even going to allow members of the British military to temporarily leave their positions to work or fight in Libya as mercenaries. This is why the US was against including in UN Resolution 1970 any article permitting the legal persecution of foreign mercenaries that are not parties to the International Criminal Court.

While the US has been responsible for leading the attack on Libya, it will be the Western Europeans who will manage the occupation.

The EU now wants to occupy Libya. They will do this under the mandate of a peacekeeping force. This will only divide Libya. It will be under the eyes of an EU peacekeeping force that the two governments in Benghazi and Tripoli will drift more and more apart. Most probably Libya will be governed separately or under a federalist system.

The US and the EU have now helped create a new Central Bank in Benghazi and a new National Oil Company in Benghazi. The US probably wants to militarily position itself in Libya and maybe even in the future try to establish its AFRICOM headquarters in Libya. Wall Street and the big Western European banks will also run Libya's finances. The energy sector will be shared by the US and the EU, with the inclusion of Qatar as a reward to the Emir of Qatar. The Emir of Qatar is already responsible for the agreements with the new National Oil Company in Benghazi and Al Jazeera has also helped create the Transitional Council's media stations.

**XU JINGJING:** Do you see any dissent among the countries in the Coalition fighting with Gaddafi? Do they have different purpose and national interest?

**NAZEMROAYA:** I do not see any evidence for major dissent amongst the US and its allies. Any dissent that exists could only occur between the US-British sides and the French-German sides. These are the twin pillars of NATO. Everyone else in NATO basically follows one of these sides.

It has been said that Germany and Turkey have opposing views with the US, Britain, and France. And Rome is somewhere in the middle. But the actions of the officials of these states speak louder than what they claim. The German government supported the war from the start. Because the German people would not allow it, Berlin could not join the attack on Libya directly. What the German government did is send more military resources to Afghanistan so that more NATO resources could go to Libya. Both Turkey and Germany could have stopped NATO from being used if they were really against the war. Turkey is also where one of the operational headquarters for the war is. Turkey is also the administrative authority at the airport in Benghazi and helping in the naval operations against Libya.

Yes, there are differing interests within the US-British and French-German sides, particularly with regard to the control of the energy reserves in Libya and North Africa. Unlike the US, the EU countries are dependent on Libyan energy, especially Italy. It is in their strategic interest to control oil and gas reserves in North Africa. If the US and London gain major control over these energy reserves, they will control the economic security of the EU. But I believe that the US and the EU are working as partners in North Africa and actually coordinating operations against China and China's allies in Africa.

**XU JINGJING:** The fighting in the city of Misurata grabs most of the attention now. What do you think about the importance of the city? How will the result of the fighting in Misurata

influence the moves of the Libyan opposition?

**NAZEMROAYA:** The city of Misurata is the Shanghai of Libya. For the Transitional Council it will be a major economic prize. It is an important industrial and trade base for Libya and Africa. Some of Africa's largest companies are there, including the Libyan Iron and Steel Company. Misurata is also a major shipping port. Many Libyan national companies and industries have their company operations and headquarters in Misurata and the surrounding district.

These are the reasons why Germany and the EU want to send their military forces into Misurata under the excuse of peacekeeping. The EU wants to send soldiers there for purely economic and strategic reasons and not because of any humanitarian reasons. The EU force is composed of the same countries that are in NATO. They are just using another name. The difference between the EU force and NATO is only technical.

What is also ridiculous is that the countries that want to send their soldiers as peacekeepers are combatants in this war. In fact, because NATO went to war through a collective decision, anyone that is a part of NATO is a combatant. This includes Germany. This should disqualify the entire EU force as peacekeepers in Libya. You need uninvolved third parties that are not combatants as peacekeepers.

Countries like China, Algeria, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Russia, Iran, Belarus, Brazil, Malaysia, and Venezuela should send peacekeepers. The Russians and their military partners in the post-Soviet space could all play a major role as peacekeepers. Even the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) could play a role. It is in the strategic interest of China and its allies to make sure that Libya is not colonized or victimized like NATO-occupied Afghanistan. The events in Libya are prerequisites for the Western military alliance towards isolating and confronting Iran, Russia, and China in Eurasia.

**XU JINGJING:** Do you think the US is still the decisive actor? Why?

**NAZEMROAYA:** Yes, without a doubt I do.

To answer that question let us first define the coalition which is involved in this war of aggression against Libya. The Pentagon transferred the military operations to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after a few days. Thus, the war is officially being conducted by NATO. Some other countries like Qatar, Jordan, the UAE, and Sweden are also partners under the command of NATO.

So before I examine NATO, let us look at another Cold War military alliance called the Warsaw Pact. Washington and Western Europe used to criticize the old Soviet Union by saying that the Warsaw Pact was basically a fake organization, namely that in reality it was just the Soviet Red Army. In other words Bulgaria, Romania, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Albania had no real force within the Warsaw Pact and the Warsaw Pact was just the Soviet Union acting under the shield of multilateralism in Eastern Europe. I will not argue this point.

NATO is far more complicated than the Warsaw Pact and not run by one country. The US, Britain, France, and Germany are the pillars of NATO and they are the real decision makers in Brussels. Turkey due to the legacy of Kamal Ataturk also exercises some independence in NATO. Everyone else either follows the US and Britain or they follow France and Germany.

But under all this, NATO is just a more advanced Warsaw Pact. The US should look in the mirror. Washington's argument about the Warsaw Pact also applies to itself in NATO.

Today NATO is not too different from how the US characterized the Warsaw Pact as being the Soviet Union under a multilateral flag. NATO itself and the Pentagon's commanders say that NATO is almost completely formed by the US military. In other words NATO is the US military padded by Britain, France, Germany, Turkey, Canada, Italy, and some other European countries as auxiliaries. The US fights the wars and then gets these countries to go and occupy the defeated country and privatize its economy under foreign control. When it comes down to it, NATO is really the US military with the political support and financing of these other countries. Senator McCain and the US Senate just a few weeks ago demanded that the rest of NATO finance the US for the war against Libya. Most the other members of NATO are actually US satellites.

NATO without the US would never even have been able to fight Yugoslavia or have invaded Afghanistan, let alone launch any devastating war against the Libyans. Just look at the role that the US played in bombing Libya. It did most the bombings and heavy work. What is happening is that the US is hiding behind an image of multilateralism with NATO. It does not want to appear as if it is in charge. Washington is afraid of public opinion. This is why Obama, Clinton, and Gates publicly pretended the US government was against the no-fly zones until the last moment when the real US objectives became transparent. At the same time that the Obama Administration was saying they were against no-fly zones, the US was mobilizing to attack Libya. Paris and London just played the lead roles on the public stage.

I want to also make one last and very important point. President Obama, Prime Minister Cameron, and President Sarkozy are all hiding behind NATO, because NATO is an international organization that escapes any form of political accountability. There is no voting constituency of people that NATO can be held accountable towards. The US and Britain can bomb Libya with NATO for months and claim that it is in NATO's hand and that NATO is in charge of the war. Thus Obama, Cameron, and Sarkozy are all trying to escape political accountability as politicians to the public through letting NATO fight the war and hiding behind it.

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An award-winning author and geopolitical analyst, Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya is the author of *The Globalization of NATO* (Clarity Press) and a forthcoming book *The War on Libya and the Re-Colonization of Africa*. He has also contributed to several other books ranging from cultural critique to international relations. He is a Sociologist and Research Associate at the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG), a contributor at the Strategic Culture Foundation (SCF), Moscow, and a member of the Scientific Committee of Geopolitica, Italy.

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