

# The Tragedy-Cum-Farce in Algeria. NATO is “Playing Off Different Sides”

What If David Cameron was Lying? How Would We Know?

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*The end of the Gaddafi regime in Libya was celebrated with breath-taking idiocy by European leaders and a genuflecting corporate media. Fifteen months later, the media is reporting on neighbouring Algeria, the largest country in Africa - and one where a hostage-rescue mission has ended in carnage.*

Either the UK Prime Minister David Cameron is telling the truth and wasn't even notified by French-proxy President Bouteflika of Algeria or he is lying when it comes to what happened at the heavily fortified BP-Statoil plant near Tigantourine, deep in the Sahara desert. If Cameron is telling the truth, then why should it seem so insolent for a sovereign leader to react to mission-critical information on the ground and initiate an attack? Would Obama, Hollande or Cameron inform Algiers if they had received a call from their special forces on the ground on an imminent attack on the hostages? Algeria isn't really a sovereign country and there might as well never have been the Battle of Algiers, what with the appalling redistribution of wealth accruing from the energy sector and all the foreign private and state actors on the ground.

But what if Cameron was lying - how would we know? And why are journalists so unquestioning when they receive information from their political leaders? How many years has it been since Iraq when UK journalists were supposed to get the hang of the idea that those in power don't always tell the truth? Today, Libya is a catastrophe with no corporate journalists to cover it. Meanwhile, NATO's attempts at destroying Assad's secular government by funding Al Qaeda has led only to strengthening Wahabism. No wonder it's difficult to work out what is going on if individual journalists take power at face value.

More pertinently, the whole tragedy-cum-farce at the Ain Amenas energy facility is a grim reminder of how pointless and misguided is NATO in their trans-global attempts at securing energy resources and playing off different sides. This isn't the nineteenth century any more.

NATO weapons were poured in before French and British premiers could proudly declare victory in Libya - that energy rich land on the Mediterranean with some of the sweetest oil in the world. Britain, in particular, chose to back exactly the kind of people that cheered the September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 attacks on Washington and New York. Why did they do this? To a large

part, because government drew on an entire echelon of academic and intelligence analysts who have completely misunderstood the world since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

While U.S. President Bill Clinton sowed the seeds of the economic destruction of the United States with the abolition of Glass-Steagall, a concurrent suicidal foreign policy was well underway. In its own hemisphere, the U.S. made useless attempts at suppressing Latin and Central American rage against U.S. power as the tide turned against American death squads, assassinations and terrorism.

There was continuing massive American support for that terrorist entity in the heart of the Middle East – Israel. The Zionists rewarded the U.S. in return by backing Salafists who despised everything the United States ever stood for.

And, all the way, Europe with its absurd EU institutions and crazy European currency, followed U.S. policy because of assumptions about the future of capitalism, markets and a neoliberal version of what Enlightenment thinking was actually about. Like levers, each intricately pulled to reach this outcome, we have a conjunction of Europe on its knees trying to clamber out of economic catastrophe and a new guerrilla warfare that even Che Guevara might never have imagined.

The faintly ridiculous anti-Marxist trend of identity politics without attendant superstructural contexts of class has reached a stage long predicted by its detractors. We have the sighs of the oppressed amplified around the world and only those powers who *negotiate* with it can progress – take a look at BRICS GDP figures. China's come out today so expect earnest downplaying from Western media.

NATO as an organisation might as well be a Wahabi Loya Jurga in the Hindu Kush for all it has done to spread the toxic views of Osama bin Laden and his “evil-doers”. Meanwhile, the world's next superpowers negotiate with multivariate parties, gaining an economic foothold here, a strategic partnership there.

As France's Francois Hollande tries desperately to cling on to Uranium resources in pan-national, Tuareg West Africa to manufacture ever more nuclear weapons, it should be obvious that his mission will end in failure. As late as 11 December 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon was saying that the UN Security Council should not approve any UN financial support for war in Mali. The Chapter VII UN resolution 2085 talks about an “Africa-led” force to foster peace – though EU corporate media say French airstrikes are covered by that resolution. But, in any case, weren't the UK SAS, France's GIGN and U.S. Deltas already on the ground in Mali? There are now European ground troops. And there will be asymmetric warfare in civilian areas of European cities in the years to come.

A quarter of a millennium before the creation of the United States, Sunni Ali, made Gao (today in Mali) the capital of the Songhay Empire. It is currently enduring airstrikes from French Rafale planes using ordnance that costs unimaginable multiples of the average wage in Uranium-rich Mali. Ali was succeeded by Askia Muhammad the Great and the 16th-century Moroccan explorer Leo Africanus said of Africa's Songhay Empire that “more profit

[was] made from the book trade than from any other line of business.” NATO leaders could do worse than read a few books before they sacrifice everything for access to Uranium to proliferate nuclear weapons of mass destruction. And while they’re about it, they can stop funding “Al Qaeda”.

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