

Will the US and its NATO Partners Establish a Permanent Military Presence in Libya?

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa](#)
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Recent developments suggest that the US and its allies are intent upon establishing a permanent military presence in Libya.

The events in Benghazi as well as the rising protest movement against the Tripoli proxy regime are being used as a justification for sending US and allied troops to Libya.

US troops are being sent in to protect the Islamist Libyan regime installed by NATO in the wake of the 2011 bombing campaign:

The State Department said in a statement that it has ordered the departure of a handful of "non-essential" personnel from Tripoli as a result of the "unsettled situation," which includes mass protests outside government facilities. (Washington Post, May 10, 2013)

According to reports, the protests erupted in relation to the adoption of a law which would exclude from public office officials who had served in the deposed government of Moammar Gaddafi.

Rallies against the regime have taken place in other major cities including Benghazi and Tobruk, "with hundreds of activists denouncing the armed thugs and decrying what they describe as political maneuverings by the nation's Muslim Brotherhood." ([New Zealand Herald](#), May 11, 2013)

For nearly two weeks, Libya has been gripped by fear of new armed conflict after militias stormed and surrounded government buildings in Tripoli, blocking access to ministries in an attempt to push parliament to pass a contentious law that would prevent members of Moammar Gadhafi's regime from serving in senior government posts.

Libyan lawmakers approved the bill during the weekend, with guns still drawn on the streets, and the militias seemed to be gradually lifting their siege in the capital. But witnesses said they remained hunkered down inside the Foreign and Justice Ministry, paralyzing the institutions and preventing employees from coming to work.

On Friday, an American military official said U.S. forces in Europe are on a heightened state of alert in response to a deteriorating security situation in the Libyan capital. The official, who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly, spoke on condition of anonymity. ([Ibid](#))

This mass movement –brutally repressed by government militia– is directed against the Islamist government installed in Tripoli in the wake of the 2011 NATO “humanitarian” bombing campaign. Without US-NATO support, including the dispatch of Western troops, this proxy government will not survive.

In this regard, the Pentagon has confirmed that military personnel from a U.S. Marine unit stationed in Spain has been transferred to Sicily. This unit is on standby, to be dispatched to Libya at short notice.

Similarly, another elite response group stationed in Germany is also on standby:

“We are prepared to respond if necessary, if conditions deteriorate or if we were called upon,” Pentagon spokesman George Little told reporters in Washington on Monday.

“Obviously we have moved assets and personnel,” he said, without providing any more details. ... (Press TV, May 13, 2013)

These developments must be understood in the context of the broader process of militarization of the African continent. The decision to deploy US troops to Libya are coordinated with Britain and France.

French troops stationed in Mali could also be redeployed to Libya. According to France’s Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, a new “terrorist hotbed” has developed which is threatening the “sovereignty” of the US-NATO supported Libyan government:

“Apparently in Libya there are attempts to constitute a new terrorist hotbed — ‘apparently,’ I weigh my words well — and there’s a Libyan state that exists, has institutions, and is appropriate to help to ensure its sovereignty over its territory,” (quoted by [FoxNews,](#))

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