

Libya -- another fine mess

by Owen Jones via ben - The Guardian UK *Monday, Mar 24 2014, 10:49am*
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Remember the effluent/rhetoric that issued from the mouths of Obama, Clinton, Cameron, Sarkozy, Merkel, Rasmussen and other Western leaders complicit in the gigantic crime against Libya. 'A brutal dictator is killing civilians' (lies) one pretext after another to steal Libya's (and Gaddafi's) immense wealth. Twenty six thousand (26,000) bombing sorties later, fanatic Islamists fighting for the US and Saudis on the ground, razed cities that supported Gaddafi, a DEBT FREE North African nation that enjoyed the highest living standard in the region was trashed, a western Reserve Bank established in Benghazi and the nation's oil and other resources stolen to pay for the 'huge debt incurred to re-build' essential infrastructures -- a totally transparent thieving gambit obvious to all, has left a stable prosperous nation, ruined. Who will pay for this monumental CRIME, Mr Ban Ki-Moon, you stinking lackey? Take a good IMPARTIAL look at US/NATO criminal handiwork in Libya and then squawk another tune!



NATO chief Rasmussen with Interpol listed Albanian Kosovar organised crime figure Hashim Thaci

There is a reason western media is silent over the Libyan fiasco; it is such a blatant crime that any news of the plight of the nation and its devastated ('liberated') people would compromise those involved in the rape and plunder of the nation and the appalling disregard of its now suffering people. [*"We came, we saw, he died, where's the Gold and Oil?!"*]

Story from the Guardian follows, however, the real picture is far worse than the article suggests:

Libya is a disaster we helped create. The west must take responsibility

It's called the pottery store rule: "you break it, you own it". But it doesn't just apply to pots and mugs, but to nations. In the build-up to the catastrophic invasion of Iraq, it was invoked by Colin Powell, then US secretary of state. "You are going to be the proud owner of 25 million people," he reportedly told George W Bush. "You will own all their hopes, aspirations and problems." But while many of these military interventions have left nations shattered, western governments have resembled the customer who walks away whistling, hoping no one has noticed the mess left behind. Our media have been all

too complicit in allowing them to leave the scene.

Libya is a striking example. The UN-authorised air campaign in 2011 is often lauded as a shining example of successful foreign intervention. Sure, the initial mandate – which was simply to protect civilians – was exceeded by nations who had only recently been selling arms to Muammar Gaddafi, and the bombing evolved into regime-change despite Russia's protests. But with a murderous thug ejected from power, who could object?

Today's Libya is overrun by militias and faces a deteriorating human rights situation, mounting chaos that is infecting other countries, growing internal splits, and even the threat of civil war. Only occasionally does this growing crisis creep into the headlines: like when an oil tanker is seized by rebellious militia; or when a British oil worker is shot dead while having a picnic; or when the country's prime minister is kidnapped.

According to Amnesty International, the "mounting curbs on freedom of expression are threatening the rights Libyans sought to gain". A repressive Gaddafi-era law has been amended to criminalise any insults to officials or the general national congress (the interim parliament). One journalist, Amara al-Khattabi, was put on trial for alleging corruption among judges. Satellite television stations deemed critical of the authorities have been banned, one station has been attacked with rocket-propelled grenades, and journalists have been assassinated.

Some human rights abuses began in the tumultuous days that followed Gaddafi's removal, and were ignored by the west. Ever since the fall of his dictatorship, there have been stories of black Libyans being treated en masse as Gaddafi loyalists and attacked. In a savage act of collective punishment, 35,000 people were driven out of Tawergha in retaliation for the brutal siege of the anti-Gaddafi stronghold of Misrata. The town was trashed and its inhabitants have been left in what human rights organisations are calling "deplorable conditions" in a Tripoli refugee camp. Such forced removals continue elsewhere. Thousands have been arbitrarily detained without any pretence of due process; and judges, prosecutors, lawyers and witnesses have been attacked or even killed. Libya's first post-Gaddafi prosecutor general, Abdulaziz Al-Hassadi, was assassinated in the town of Derna last month.

But it is the militias that filled the post-Gaddafi vacuum who represent the greatest threat to Libyans' human rights and security. "Libya has been sitting on the international community's back burner as the country has slipped into near chaos," warns Human Rights Watch. In an attempt to integrate militias into the state machinery, the weak central government pays 160,000 members of these often violent gangs \$1,000 a month and charges them with upholding authority.

When residents of Benghazi – the heartland of the revolution – protested against militia rule in June last year, 32 people were killed in what became known as "Black Saturday". In another protest in Tripoli last November, 46 died and 500 were injured.

Under militia rule, Libya is beginning to disintegrate. Last summer forces under the command of the warlord Ibrahim Jadran took control of eastern oil terminals, demanding autonomy and more resources for Cyrenaica, the long-neglected oil-rich east of the country. Oil exports collapsed from about 1.5m barrels a day to fewer than 500,000, costing the country billions of dollars. Although Jadran's forces initially only drew support from the Magharba people, other ethnic groups have now joined his struggle. It

is these forces which hijacked a oil tanker this month, prompting threats from Libya's prime minister that it would be bombed until US forces captured it this weekend. Clashes have broken out in Jadran's home town of Ajdabiya. In painful echoes of Iraq's nightmare, a car bomb exploded at a Benghazi military base last week and killed at least eight soldiers, and Libya's main airport was shut on Friday after a bomb exploded on its runway.

One of the great perversities of the so-called war on terror is that fundamentalist Islamist forces have flourished as a direct consequence of it. Libya is no exception, even though such movements often have little popular support. The Muslim Brotherhood and other elements are better organised than many of their rivals, helping to remove the prime minister, push through legislation, and establish alliances with opportunistic militias.

Ominously, Libya's chaos is spilling across the region. The country is awash with up to 15 million rifles and other weapons, and a report by the UN panel of experts this month found that "Libya has become a primary source of illicit weapons". These arms are fuelling chaos in 14 countries, including Somalia, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Niger. Qatar is helping to deliver Libyan armaments to Syria, where Russian-made weapons bought by Gaddafi's regime are being given to fundamentalist Islamist rebels.

In what has all the hallmarks of mission creep, a small number of US soldiers are being sent to Tripoli to begin training troops. But a stable future for Libya seems remote, however much the country's strife is safely hidden away from the headlines. It is dividing along every fracture line imaginable: whether it be ethnic, tribal, regional or political. Most Libyans have failed to even register for upcoming elections.

There is a real prospect of the country collapsing into civil war or even breaking up. Unless there are negotiated settlements to its multiple problems, Libya will surely continue its descent into mayhem, and the region could be dragged into the mire with it.

No wonder western governments and journalists who hailed the success of this intervention are so silent. But here are the consequences of their war, and they must take responsibility for them.

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<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/24/libya-disaster-shames-western-interventionists>

Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-1068.html>