

Puppet Obama's Libya Fiasco

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It should be noted that everywhere the US and its NATO ally have intervened over the past decade the result has been the ruination of the interfered with nation and countless lost innocent lives. These criminal interventions, under one pretext or another, must cease as they have clearly proven disastrous for not only the intervened nation but for world stability and security. The refugee problem has exploded and various extremist groups have been spawned as a direct consequence of the vandalism and sociopathic policies of America and its NATO ally. Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan have proven that these interventions have destabilised the ENTIRE world. The principals behind these interventionist policies should be arrested and held to account for contravening international law and the obvious crime of mass murder.



Barack Hussein Obama

U.S. Marines are expanding the U.S. military presence in Spain with eyes set on Libya's escalating three-way civil war, which threatens to become a Syrian-like quagmire on Europe's doorstep, an unintended consequence of the 2011 U.S.-European-led "regime change" that overthrew and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

While there's little chance - for now - that the Marines will get entangled in yet another military adventure, America's European allies are fumbling the Libyan crisis, allowing the Islamic State (Daesh, ISIS, ISIL or whatever you call it) to exploit a power vacuum, though still far from taking over.

The agreement, signed this week and awaiting only ratification from Spain's Parliament, will make the Morón de la Frontera air base in southern Spain into a permanent base of operations against jihadists in North Africa, covering not just Libya but also Mali, Tunisia and Algeria. Troops stationed there will swell from the 850 currently there under temporary agreements to 2,200, plus 500 civilians. The agreement also involves basing 26 aircraft.

Morón will house a forward-operating base with a potent armory and fast-reaction special-op teams to carry out elite counter-terrorism operations, like the one in 2013 when American forces captured an accused Libyan terrorist for his role in the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Or the 2014 capture of the alleged mastermind of the 2012 attack in Benghazi that killed U.S. Ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other U.S. diplomatic personnel.

And perhaps as a prelude to what is to come, there was the stealth air assault earlier this week in Libya (the first American one since the 2011 NATO campaign) that targeted Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the elusive Algerian Al Qaeda leader who led the attack on an Algerian gas plant in 2013 that left 38 hostages dead, including three Americans. (His death is not confirmed and Al Qaeda's branch in northern Africa denied that Belmokhtar is dead.)

To be sure, the U.S. deal with Spain is not a strategic shift, but rather a military acknowledgement that Europe may not be able to deal with the Libyan chaos. The Islamic State franchise already controls coastal territory and is now targeting Misrata, the third largest city.

The threat is real — and individual countries like Italy have called for a more active military role. The problem is that NATO is divided. And, while the Islamic State menace is still nascent, Libya's strategic position — just a few hundred miles south of Sicily — represents a danger to Europe, underscored by recent attempts of migrants to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea from Libya.

The Libyan conflict is looking like the early stages of the Iraqi conflict after longtime dictator Saddam Hussein was ousted and killed, unleashing pent-up hostilities among competing tribes, ethnic groups and political factions. There are similarities, too, with the Syrian civil war in which U.S. Arab allies and Turkey have supported the overthrow of President Bashar al-Assad.

In Libya, there are two governments operating, each with their own foreign support. In the east, based in Tobruk on a cruise ship, is the "Dignity" government, which most European countries and the Saudi-Egyptian alliance endorse. The Tobruk government is backed by an authoritarian and volatile general, Khalifa Haftar.

In the west, based in the capital Tripoli, is a moderate Islamist coalition under the "Libya Dawn" banner, backed by Qatar and Turkey. Though Muslim Brotherhood-based, the coalition is mostly allied warring clans that mistrust their eastern rivals. The U.K. and the U.S. officially remain on the sidelines, supporting United Nations negotiations aimed at unifying the Tripoli and Tobruk factions.

The civil war — and military stalemate — has so far thwarted all attempts to build a reconciliation government, a prerequisite to combat gains by ISIS and other radical militants, including Al Qaeda. The UN-set deadline expired this week with no signs of a breakthrough, basically because most European countries continue to support the eastern bloc despite its fragile political position.

The latest UN-pitched deal favors the Tripoli faction, but it has been rejected by the Tobruk faction. In essence, each warring side demands to have a commanding role in any future national unity government, while rejecting any prominent role for the other.

Sound familiar? Rival political factions unable to resolve their differences while extremists — Al Qaeda and the Islamic State — gain strength and consolidate territory. This was the pattern in Iraq and Syria — and now Libya, where the ISIS franchise is bulking up in Sirte, Gaddafi's hometown, smack in the center of the two other sides.

ISIS is still far from posing a serious threat, but some of the militants are battle-hardened from the conflicts in Iraq and Syria. ISIS is also slowly winning over support from local militants, although still lacking the necessary economic muscle, a situation that could soon change.

ISIS already controls vital water and power supply lines and is targeting oil facilities to the east. Strategically, however, ISIS is looking west on Misrata, the last bastion before ISIS can target

Tripoli. The ISIS attacks are already straining the front lines of the “Libya Dawn” coalition.

The UN Security Council is alarmed and is pressing the two political factions - in Tripoli and Tobruk - urging both sides in Libya to cooperate and compromise, but that doesn't change the situation on the ground. Europe is divided as is the Arab world and Turkey, creating more space for ISIS to put down roots and grow.

By compounding Europe's already serious immigration crisis, Libyan instability is urgent for Europe. There are reportedly between 500,000 and 1 million migrants waiting to cross from the anarchic country, especially to Italy. Gaddafi, in fact, warned Europe not to depose him because the disorder could create fertile ground for both Islamic extremism and an immigration crisis.

Besides flooding Europe with immigrants, ISIS could transform Libya into a training hub, bordering Egypt and Tunisia, which is even closer to Italy. Then what? Which is why President Barack Obama is increasingly alarmed at the situation.

As Europe and NATO dither, the U.S. is bolstering its military presence through bilateral partnerships, not just in Spain but also Italy. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Martin Dempsey said it bluntly last week speaking at a Naples Navy base:

“The truth is, in our line of work, the very last thing we want to do is play a home game. We really want to play an away game and we need teammates to do it. We need to be forward. And we need to be sure that as conflict approaches - and conflict will approach - we have a shot at shaping it before we're in it.”

Obama's goal is not to get deeply involved in the Libyan civil war, again. His acquiescence in 2011 to demands from then-National Security Council aide Samantha Power and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to join in the overthrow of Gaddafi was a major factor in creating the Libyan chaos in the first place.

However, after Obama leaves office, the next president - whether Hillary Clinton, Jeb Bush or some other contender - might opt to side with Saudi Arabia and Egypt against the “Libya Dawn” bloc in Tripoli, radicalizing Libya's more moderate Islamists and driving many into the arms of ISIS.

The risk of a full collapse of Libya is real with Europe seemingly unable to get its act together and Obama failing to act with the necessary urgency. As with so many other [catastrophic] foreign policy issues, Obama seems indecisive, unwilling to control his administration's hardliners and hoping for a consensus that never comes. In the meantime, the U.S. military is making preparations for a military scenario.

And, while it may be better for the U.S. to play away games than home games, Europe does not have that luxury because Libya is getting very close to home for Europe.

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Purported leader of ISIL, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

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