

Towards a Renewed Imperialist Intervention in Libya? Anti-NATO Forces Retake Areas in Southern Libya

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For nearly seven months in 2011, NATO planes — particularly from the U.S., France, Britain and Canada — carried out a massive bombing campaign in Libya intended to overthrow the government of Muammar Gaddafi.

After getting the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution imposing an arms embargo on Libya and then another authorizing a so-called “no-fly zone” in which only their planes could fly, the imperialists succeeded in having Gaddafi captured and brutally killed, opening the way for the establishment of a new regime that would further their interests in that oil-rich North African country.

Now, just two and a half years later, this puppet government is losing ground in southern and western Libya to pro-Gaddafi forces, who have taken back several towns and an air base.

These developments have prompted French Admiral Edouard Guillard to appeal for a renewed imperialist intervention in Libya, claiming that developments on the southern border could lead to a “terrorist threat.” (Washington Post, Jan. 27)

Guillard claimed that any intervention would require the “consent” of the neocolonial regime that these same imperialists set up in Tripoli. It is headed by Prime Minister Ali Zeidan and the General National Congress.

Since mid-January forces that remain allied with the former Jamahiriya political and economic system set up by Gaddafi have taken control of several cities and towns in the south. Clashes have also been reported around the capital of Tripoli, where nationalist forces have fought pitched battles with militias and military forces backed by the GNC regime. (Libya Herald, Jan. 20)

The withdrawal of the Tebu, who are dark-skinned Africans, from an air base at Tamenhint created the conditions for the seizure of this important location by pro-Gaddafi forces on Jan. 21.

According to a Jan. 22 Saudi Gazette report, “The Tamenhint air base 30 km northeast of Sebha is reported to be back in pro-Gaddafi hands after Tebu forces from Murzuk who were guarding it withdrew. They unilaterally pulled out Monday evening [Jan. 20] claiming that the government was deliberately exploiting clashes in Sebha between Tebus and Awlad Sulaiman in order to divert attention from moves to replace it with a new administration.”

These events have sent shockwaves throughout the GNC and Zeidan, its weak and vacillating prime minister, who is allied with the United States and other imperialist states responsible for installing the current regime. The situation in Libya has clearly shown that the current regime has failed to stabilize its rule. Militias set up to bring down the Gaddafi regime are reportedly in open defiance of Zeidan and other “authorities” in Tripoli.

Oil is the major export of the North African state. The industry has been largely shut down after workers and militias at several drilling facilities and ports took control of production and threatened to engage in trade with foreign firms without the consent of Tripoli. Zeidan has limited support even within the GNC; the Islamic Justice and Construction Party recently resigned from the government over political differences with the prime minister.

Draconian laws enacted

Nonetheless, it is in the south that the green flag of the Jamahiriya is being openly flown in defiance of the imperialist-backed regime. This is causing panic in the government, which passed a new law banning satellite television networks that have been broadcasting pro-Gaddafi news and commentaries.

According to a Jan. 26 report from AllAfrica.com, Decree 5/2014, entitled “Concerning the Cessation and Ban on the Broadcasting of Certain Satellite Channels,” instructs the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Communications and Media to “take necessary steps required” to halt the transmission of all satellite television stations hostile to the regime in Tripoli. The decree further instructs the government to “take all measures” against states or businesses in territories from which the channels are broadcast if they fail to block the transmissions.

This ban on satellite stations that have taken a pro-Gaddafi position in their editorial content includes the al-Khadra Channel and al-Jamahiriyah.

Dissatisfaction is growing among the Libyan population. Once the most prosperous nation in Africa, with a standard of living that exceeded several European countries, the conditions inside the country have drastically deteriorated since the 2011 imperialist-imposed counterrevolution. The decline in living standards, the failure of the regime to rein in the militias that terrorize the population, the collapse of the oil industry and widespread corruption have drawn broad criticism, even among the favored elites.

Another decree issued in January prohibits scholarship students and public employees from speaking out against the conditions prevailing in Libya. According to AllAfrica.com, “It calls on Libyan embassies abroad and others to draw up lists of names and refer them to the Prosecutor General for prosecution.”

Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan

There is no benefit for the masses in oppressed nations where the U.S. and other imperialist states have overthrown governments and installed puppet regimes. The situation in Libya is mirrored in Iraq, where people are dying every day from internecine conflict and the overall horrendous conditions prevailing among the majority of the population.

Over 100,000 people have died in Syria over the last three years since the U.S. and Saudi Arabia promoted a counterrevolutionary assault on the population. The current Geneva II talks in Switzerland are ostensibly designed to reach a political solution in Syria, but the U.S. and its allies are continuing to finance and coordinate those seeking the overthrow of the

government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Anti-war and anti-imperialist groups in the Western states should oppose this military and political interference into the internal affairs of African, Middle Eastern and Asian states — such as Afghanistan, where after 12 years the Pentagon-NATO forces are no closer to victory than in 2001. The U.S. and NATO must be forced to withdraw their occupying forces and shut down their military bases.

Those oppressed nations under imperialist occupation should be paid reparations for the destruction carried out by Western military forces. The resources utilized to maintain these occupations should instead be redirected to rebuild the cities and towns here that are facing an unprecedented economic crisis through austerity and massive poverty.

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