

Leaked Plan of Western Governments for “Post-Gaddafi Libya”

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Western governments have helped prepare a blueprint for a post-Gaddafi Libya that would retain much of the regime’s security infrastructure to avoid an Iraq-style collapse into anarchy.

The 70-page plan, obtained by London’s The Times, charts the first months after the fall of the Gaddafi regime. The document was drawn up by the National Transition Council in Benghazi with Western help.

Officials say the blueprint draws on lessons from the disastrous regime change in Iraq in 2003 and the rebel takeover in eastern Libya in March.

The plans are highly reliant on the defection of parts of the Gaddafi security apparatus to the rebels after his overthrow. This is likely to prove not only risky, but controversial, with many rebel fighters determined to sweep away all vestiges of the regime.

The document includes proposals for a 10,000-15,000 strong “Tripoli task force”, resourced and supported by the United Arab Emirates, to take over the Libyan capital, secure key sites and arrest high-level Gaddafi supporters.

Start of sidebar. Skip to end of sidebar. End of sidebar. Return to start of sidebar. It claims 800 serving Gaddafi government security officials have been recruited covertly to the rebel cause and are ready to form the “backbone” of a new security apparatus.

The blueprint contains plans for about 5000 police officers now serving in units not ideologically committed to the Gaddafi regime to be transferred immediately to the interim government’s forces to prevent a security vacuum.

The documents claim that the rebel groups in Tripoli and surrounding areas have 8660 supporters, including 3255 in the Gaddafi army.

A mass defection by high-ranking officials is considered highly likely, with 70 per cent of them judged to support the regime out of fear alone.

The authors of the report also believe the escalation of NATO attacks to an “unbearable” level is a strong possibility.

The NTC in Benghazi confirmed the authenticity of the planning documents, but asked that The Times withhold details that could endanger rebel supporters working in Tripoli.

The rebel government's ambassador to the UAE and the head of the planning cell for the task force, Aref Ali Nayed, expressed regret the document had been leaked. But he said: "It is important that the general public (in Libya) knows there is an advance plan, and it is now a much more advanced plan."

The document shows detailed planning for key security, telecommunications, power and transport infrastructure – as well as for the country's famous classical ruins – to be secured in the hours after the regime's collapse .

Rebel leaders express concern in the document that Tripoli's population should not feel they are being "invaded" by troops from eastern Libya. Significantly, there are no plans to deploy rebel forces from the east in Tripoli. Instead "sections of Nafusa Mountain and Zentan freedom fighters" from the west would be moved to the capital and media messages would stress that there is "no external imposition on Tripolitarians". Most of Tripoli's interim security force would come from the city.

An internationally backed one-month program for the emergency supply of \$US550 million (\$532m) of gas and petrol to western Libya would begin immediately after the regime's fall in an effort to restore normal life.

There is also a UN-supported program to deliver immediate humanitarian aid, including bottled water, by land, sea and air, with support from key Muslim countries such as the UAE, Qatar and Turkey.

In the first minutes after the announcement that Gaddafi is no longer in control, a pre-recorded program of announcements by rebel leaders and clerics would initiate the Tripoli task force plan, call for calm and warn against revenge attacks on regime supporters. An FM radio station has already been prepared for the purpose in a nearby country. In the event of Gaddafi being killed or deposed, "strategic communications" planning suggests the NTC and its Western backers would be prepared to negotiate with his sons or what are described as "regime captains".

A series of lessons learnt from the takeover in Benghazi warns against the creation of multiple rebel groups in Tripoli and calls for a "clear plan to deal with a hostile fifth column".

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