

Libya Intensifies Resistance to U.S. and NATO-led Occupation

Pentagon admits greater involvement on the ground

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Resistance by the loyalist forces in Libya has escalated with major clashes between supporters of the Gaddafi government and the U.S.-NATO financed rebel National Transitional Council (NTC). For over two weeks the western-backed leadership along with the imperialists have been pressuring the people of Bani Walid to surrender and allow the seizure of their city of 100,000 people in the western region of this oil-producing North African state.

After failing to convince the leadership of the city to give in to the neo-colonial aims of the NTC and their backers, several attempts by the rebels and NATO to attack Bani Walid and its environs have been repelled by the armed organization of the people. In these recent skirmishes, it was revealed that the Libyan military still maintains the capability to engage in both offensive and defensive operations.

Prior to the attempt to enter Bani Walid, the armed forces of Libya shelled with grad rockets the positions of the NTC rebels outside the city. When rebel units approached the northern entrance of the town they were hit by additional mortar rounds and sniper fire.

After the withdrawal from the areas approaching Bani Walid, the NTC rebels set out to reinforce their units in the approach to Sirte, the western coastal city that is a strong area of support to Col. Muammar Gaddafi. The effort to approach Sirte was also met with stiff resistance by the loyalist forces prompting the rebels to retreat 125 km from the city.

The prevention of the rebels from entering these areas exposes the falsehood that the Libyan government does not have continuing support inside the country. Prior to the invasion of Tripoli, demonstrations of millions of people came out in support of the government and in opposition to the U.S.-NATO war.

NATO escalated its bombing operations over both Bani Walid and Sirte in the days leading up to the expiration of the deadline given to the people to surrender. There were reports that NATO advised the rebels to withdraw pending additional air strikes against the loyalists in these cities still under the control of the government.

Additional offensive operations by the loyalists against the U.S.-NATO war in the country included the September 12 bold attack on the oil port at Ras Lanuf, a major focal point of the war over the last seven months. It was reported that 17 NTC rebels were killed in the attack that came after the workers set fire to sections of the refinery as an act of sabotage against the imperialist plan to steal vast amounts of oil from the state that prior to the war

produced 1.5 million barrels per day of high grade crude.

On the same day, September 12, there were attacks against rebel NTC forces at the airport outside Tripoli where explosions were heard in the distance. During this same time period there was an escalation in sniping against NTC elements throughout Tripoli.

Even the New York Times admitted on September 12 that “Abdulrahman Busin, a spokesman for the council’s military operations, said the attack on Ras Lanuf was apparently a response to news that the council had taken steps to restart oil production, which had been one of the country’s major contributors of income before the conflict. He said that forces allied with the council were still fighting loyalists to bring an industrial area in Ras Lanuf back under control.” (NYT, Sept. 12)

U.S. Admits Greater Role Amid NATO Continuation of War

As the war in Libya escalated over the months since the beginning of the rebel attacks on February 17 in Benghazi and other areas in the east of the country, it has been revealed that the U.S. and the NATO countries have organized, financed and coordinated the actions and movements of the rebel NTC. The White House dispatched Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) operatives to Libya to provide assistance to the counter-revolution.

It was reported during this same period earlier on during the war that British MI-6 agents and Special Forces were involved in the fighting as well as units from the U.S.-backed military in neighboring Egypt and Qatar in the Gulf. This direct ground intervention by the imperialist states and their allies illustrated the degree of importance that the ruling classes in these various western countries valued the efforts to seize control of Libya, its waterways, national treasury and natural resources.

Nonetheless, further claims gave additional proof of the deployment on the ground of U.S. military units. Despite consistent reports that U.S. forces had been spotted in the theater of war, the Pentagon has repeatedly denied these allegations.

However, it was reported on September 12 by the Associated Press that “The Defense Department says it has four troops in Libya—only the second time since the U.S. became involved there that it has acknowledged having any military personnel on the ground. The first time was in March when Marines rescued an Air Force pilot who had ejected over eastern Libya.” (AP, Sept. 12)

Although Navy Capt. John Kirby, a spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, indicated on September 12 that the military personnel were only in Libya to investigate the re-opening of the U.S. embassy in Tripoli, in all likelihood this is part of a much broader strategy for greater Pentagon deployment inside the country. Why should the Libyan people or the international community accept these denials by Washington when the Business Insider stated “That (this) admission contradicts the Obama administration’s repeated assertions at the outset of the Libyan military intervention that no U.S. forces would be deployed to the North African nation.”? (Business Insider, Sept. 12)

This same publication later noted that “American officials have previously acknowledged the presence of some CIA agents on the ground in Libya who were reportedly helping coordinate NATO air strikes.” The Pentagon and the CIA also supplied the predator drones which were utilized to identify targets and to hit Libyan positions on the ground.

At the same time NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has stressed that the military alliance will continue its operations in Libya for the unforeseeable future. During the course of the war against Libya, there have been over 20,000 sorties and approximately 8,000 bombings.

In response to the increased resistance against the U.S.-NATO war policy in Libya, Rasmussen said that “We have seen also during this weekend that remnants of Gaddafi’s regime still constitute a threat to the civilian population. We stand ready to continue our operations as long as necessary.” (Xinhua, Sept. 12) The NATO countries and their allies have hosted several conferences aimed at expropriating the wealth of Libya where in excess of \$120 billion in foreign assets were frozen over the last several months.

Divisions Among Rebels and Further Revelations of Atrocities

Already among the rebel forces there are deep divisions that may very well provide a false rationale for the large-scale military intervention by the imperialist states. On September 9 there were reports in the Tripoli Post that 12 rebels were killed by infighting among disparate units in two towns on the eastern edge of the Nafusa Mountains. (Tripoli Post, Sept. 9)

Other reports indicate fissures between the NTC rebel fighting units and the politicians that are invited to the conferences in western capitals where they are hailed as the new leadership of the country. Even among the NTC spokespersons, there are deep differences based on political outlook and distrust between the Islamists, monarchists, government defectors and the longtime CIA-trained groups that have opposed the Gaddafi government since the 1980s.

In addition to these divisions among the western-backed rebels, there are daily reports of atrocities being committed by the rebels against Black Libyans and Africans from other countries on the continent. Hundreds of Nigerians and Ghanaians are locked up in prisons inside Libya along with dark-skinned nationals who are perceived by the reactionaries and their NATO supporters as loyalists.

Some 20 Nigerian national were alleged to have been found executed outside the Gaddafi compound in Tripoli that was overrun by the NTC forces during the first week of the invasion of the capital. These acts of racism and genocide have played a significant part in preventing the African Union from recognizing the NTC as the legitimate government of Libya despite tremendous economic and political pressure from the imperialist states.

Perhaps one of the most shocking stories to come out of Libya was revealed by former U.S. Congressman Walter Fauntroy, a civil rights activists and aide to the martyred Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Fauntroy, who travelled to Libya during the earlier days of the war seeking to mediate a peace agreement between the U.S.-NATO forces and the Gaddafi government, said that he witnessed the beheading of people by Special Forces units from the NATO countries. (Mathaba.net, September 9)

Even moderate states in Africa such as Kenya are demanding the withholding of recognition of the NTC by the international community. Kenya’s embassy was specifically targeted during the invasion of Tripoli and the foreign ministry has stressed that until there is a clear-cut plan for a transition to a representative government in Libya, the NTC should not be given diplomatic standing.

Meanwhile on September 12, amid the escalation of resistance against the U.S.-NATO war against his country, leader Muammar Gaddafi issued a statement over Arrai TV based in Syria. Gaddafi called upon the Libyan people to resist the imposition of NTC rule over Libya and reiterated that the rebels were agents of imperialism.

U.S. Anti-war and Peace Movements Must Oppose War Against Libya

It is essential that the anti-war and peace movements inside the U.S. and the other NATO countries openly oppose the imperialist plot to destroy and seize Libya. There is no such thing as a good war of neo-colonization and occupation.

The lessons of Afghanistan and Iraq prove clearly that the conditions for the majority of people living under a U.S. occupation will inevitably worsen. The deterioration of the social conditions of people living under imperialist rule, either direct or indirect, will lead to greater military intervention and consequent mass deaths and destruction.

Anti-war forces must demand imperialist hands off the national wealth of the Libyan people. The rebels can in no way be considered the legitimate representatives of the people when they have openly collaborated with former colonial powers and the leading imperialist state in the world, the U.S., to not only topple the government of the country but to also approve the theft of its natural resources and foreign assets.

The war against Libya is the first full operational mission of the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) which was established by the Pentagon in 2008 to increase military intervention on the continent. With the reliance of the United States ruling class on the oil exports and mineral resources of the African continent, there will be greater calls from the bourgeoisie to engage in efforts aimed at regime change following the same pattern set in Ivory Coast by France and in Libya by a collective of imperialist states led by the U.S.

Activists concerned with global peace and development should demand the dismantling of AFRICOM and the withdrawal of all U.S. military involvement on the African continent. Africa's affairs must be the exclusive purview of the people who will always bear the brunt of imperialist intervention and occupation. —————

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