

Libya War Continues Three Years After Gaddafi Assassination

Egypt, UAE launch airstrikes as rebel forces battle for control

By [Abayomi Azikiwe](#)

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On Oct. 20, 2011, the leader of the North African state of Libya was brutally assassinated in the city of Sirte. Col. Muammar Gaddafi had been leading a struggle to defend his country from a war of regime-change coordinated and financed by the United States and NATO.

Since the overthrow of the Jamahiriya system of government in Libya, the social conditions prevailing inside the country are by no means stable. Various factions, most of which were utilized as ground troops in the Pentagon-NATO aerial war between March 19 and Oct. 31 of 2011, remained locked in a mortal conflict for control over the oil-rich state.

Conflicting sources of political power backed up by armed militias exist in the two largest cities of Tripoli, the capital, and Benghazi in the east where the counter-revolution against Gaddafi began. Areas in the south of the country have armed themselves against the U.S.-installed regimes in Tripoli and Benghazi often in sympathy with the previous system under the Jamahiriya.

Two regional states which participated in the imperialist-engineered war against Libya, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have been carrying out periodic airstrikes against alleged "Islamist" strongholds in various locations in the east and west. Also the former renegade Gen. Khalifa Hefter, a longtime Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) asset, has mounted a bid for power utilizing sophisticated weapons and air strikes.

Oil Production Rising Despite Internal Conflict

For several months during 2014 oil production in Libya was down considerably. Conflicts between various labor organizations in addition to clashes among the militias resulted in the decline of barrels-per-day extraction to almost nil.

A dispute over who could actually sell Libyan oil on the international market was eventually addressed by the U.S. when it sent a naval warship to reclaim cargo traded by interests inside the country who were not endorsed by Washington. Subsequent efforts aimed at resolution of the disagreements have still not cleared the way for a consistent boost in production.

Unrest has erupted again surrounding which political group claiming authority in Libya would control the proceeds from oil sales. Both the parties controlling the capital of Tripoli who are often labelled as "Islamists" and the "government in exile" in the eastern city of Tobruk, say they are entitled to the revenue generated from the trade in oil.

With the decline in prices on the global market during Oct. the situation involving the struggle over the control of oil in Libya prompted the attention of the Wall Street Journal. Efforts by five western countries designated by the United Nations to reach a political settlement in the Libyan quagmire has failed, and consequently, the major imperialist powers are concerned about the supply of oil and the role of Libya in the process.

“In a joint statement late Saturday, France, Italy, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S. said they supported the U.N.-sponsored peace talks and a cessation of hostilities, “noted the Wall Street Journal. “The five governments condemned the violence by Islamist group Ansar al-Shariah, voiced concern about the attacks of the renegade general and said they were ready to sanction those threatening Libya’s security.” (Oct. 19)

This same article went on to point out that “Libya is normally one of Europe’s largest oil suppliers, but disruptions since the fall of strongman Moammar Gadhafi in 2011 have reduced its contribution to the continent’s oil supply.” Therefore, even the publication of the international finance capital has to openly acknowledge that the Pentagon-NATO policy of regime-change in Libya has disrupted oil supplies to the European continent.

The Libya Dawn group which is contesting control of the state with the ostensible moderate group led by Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani, who called themselves the House of Representatives, sent their own oil minister, Mashallah al-Zawie, to Turkey to participate in an industry conference held in Istanbul. The rival group headed by al-Thani based in Tobruk dismissed the Central Bank director Sadiq Kabir and claims they have control of the revenue from oil sales.

Nonetheless, the Wall Street Journal reports that “officials at NOC (the state-owned National Oil Co.) and at the central bank subsidiary which receives payments from oil buyers said revenues had continued to flow to its Tripoli-based accounts. Mr. al-Kabir also remains in office, they said.”

Such confusion over which entity controls Libyan oil could very well hamper the country’s future production and exports projections. Libyan oil officials say production is at 850,000 barrels a day, marking an increase of 40,000 barrels compared with earlier in Oct., suggesting that some facilities have boosted their output. In contrast operations at oil fields in eastern Libya have been interrupted by labor unrest led by workers seeking jobs at the facilities.

Imperialists Continue Proxy War in Libya

The present situation in Libya is the direct result of the war of regime-change led by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Pentagon and NATO during 2011. U.S. policy is designed to overthrow all of the sovereign and anti-imperialist governments throughout Africa and the Middle East.

Consequently, the outcome of the current situation in the regions of North Africa and the Middle East will be critical in the future course of imperialist militarism worldwide. Obviously, these policies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Sudan, Syria and Libya have prompted massive destabilization of these societies including the vast increase in internally displaced persons and refugees.

Libya, which under the years of the Jamahiriya-Gaddafi rule was the most prosperous state in Africa, now is a major source of instability in the region. The response of aerial bombardments from Egypt and the UAE will only further the generalized sense of lawlessness and terror.

Only the Libyan people themselves united around a political program of national unity and genuine sovereignty will be able to reverse the current malaise. The plans suggested involving the direct intervention of thousands of NATO troops to Libya under the rubric of the United Nations would eventually result in greater anti-western sentiments already prevalent throughout the country.

What the role of the U.S. in Libya has proven is that Washington and Wall Street has no rational policy towards Africa and the Middle East. Its interventionist posture will only breed more anti-U.S. consciousness and mass resistance to imperialist control.

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