

Rival Regimes in Libya Sign Agreement in Morocco Paving the Way for Western Troop Deployments

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United Nations accord imposed despite ongoing clashes inside the country and the presence of the so-called Islamic State

Two regimes claiming to be the legitimate government of the embattled North African state of Libya have signed a unity accord at the aegis of the United Nations.

Martin Kobler, the latest UN envoy to the country which was destroyed after the United States engineered a war of regime-change in 2011, announced the agreement. Kobler is a German career diplomat who was involved in the imperialist wars in Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Whether the unity accord holds depends on many factors. Dozens of other militias and political interests were not party to the talks, including supporters of the former government of Col. Muammar Gaddafi who was killed at the conclusion of the Pentagon and NATO led bombing campaign of March-October 2011.

Beginning on December 17, fighting erupted in the eastern city of Ajdabiya where 14 people were reported killed and 25 wounded. The clashes took place between members of the so-called Libyan National Army and armed groups who have not been clearly identified.

The Expansion of the Islamic State

Some analysts think that the Islamic State could be moving into this area as a result of the political vacuum in existence. The group has established a base within Sirte, the former home of slain leader Col. Muammar Gaddafi who was brutally assassinated during the war of regime-change on October 20, 2011. Sirte, the founding location of the continental organization the African Union (AU), is west of Ajdabiya.

At present IS reportedly controls a 150 mile-wide territory along the Mediterranean coast of Libya with the city of Sirte as its headquarters. On December 11, the rebel group seized control of the ancient Roman ruins at Sabratha, 30 miles to the west of the Libyan capital of Tripoli.

Not only has IS taken control of Sirte and other areas on the western coast but some articles suggest that its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is currently residing there. IS has been severely damaged in Syria where its oil supply lines have been disrupted as a result of the aerial campaign launched by the Russian Federation.

The rebel organization, which the United States administration under President Barack

Obama claims is its principal enemy internationally, was created and expanded through the post-occupation political dispensation established by imperialism in Iraq and the war of regime-change in neighboring Syria. IS commands substantial resources including transport trucks, banks and the control of areas of oil production and distribution in both Iraq and Syria.

According to an article published by the writer on international affairs, Joseph Micallef, which appeared in the Huffington Post, "Libya has always figured prominently in the Islamic State's expansion plans. The first three foreign provinces of Islamic State were all in Libya. On November 13, 2014, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced the creation of three new Islamic State wilayats, or provinces, in Libya (Wilayat al-Barqah, Wilayat al-Tarabulus and Wilayat al-Fizan). The three wilayats corresponded to the three historic regions of Libya (Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan). In recent weeks there have been indications that the Libyan city of Sirte would become the new capital of the Islamic State should Raqqa fall to anti-Islamic State forces." (Dec. 19)

Islamic State Build-up Coincides With Plans for Imperialist Occupation

Coinciding with this largely forced agreement was the announcement of the planned deployment of a 6,000-person military force commanded ostensibly by the former colonial power of Italy.

Britain has also stated that it will supply 1,000 troops to this operation which would enforce the agreement brokered by UN envoy Kobler. Both imperialist states participated in the air war and blockade against the Jamahiriya in 2011.

Since the Pentagon and NATO-led war of regime-change in 2011, oil production within Libya has declined from approximately 1.5 million barrels per day down to 350,000 to 400,000 at present. Estimates suggest that IS has control of 10 percent of oil production. The Huffington Post article says that IS earns profits of \$20-25 million a month from oil it controls and markets from the North African state.

In addition to the proposed intervention of Britain, France has deployed 3,500 troops to a new base just 45 miles from the southern border with Libya for supposed counterinsurgency operations. The government of President Francois Hollande has entered the bombing campaign in Syria in the aftermath of the attacks in Paris during November where 130 people were killed in various locations.

A leading British-based newspaper, the Guardian, revealed on December 19 that "Western officials are scrambling to get authorization for Libyan airstrikes in the coming days before Islamic State captures the strategically important town of Ajdabiya, gateway to the country's oil wealth. Fierce fighting is raging in the town, which sits on a rocky plateau dominating the eastern oil ports. Its capture will give Isis command of the Sirte basin, home to Libya's largest collection of oilfields."

This same report goes on to stress that "British, American and French jets are on standby for strikes from bases across the Mediterranean, with drones and reconnaissance planes already in the air. U.S. special forces are in the Libyan desert, with one unit inadvertently photographed at the western Wattiya airbase last week."

U.S. special forces entered the country but were exposed by the Libyan Airforce in a

Facebook posting on December 17. There were reports that one 20-member unit was chased away by a local militia.

Illustrating the urgent character of imperialist policy towards Libya, the Guardian also says “A vast armada of aircraft is on standby. American F-15s, which bombed an al-Qaida gathering in the town (Adjabiya) in July, are at bases in Italy. RAF Typhoons and Tornados based in Cyprus, detailed for Syria bombing, can be switched south with the use of mid-air refueling tankers. French reconnaissance planes are making passes over Isis bases and U.S. special forces are criss-crossing the region.”

Obama in a press conference on December 18 said that the U.S. should have occupied Libya in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Gaddafi government. Nonetheless, the president refused to acknowledge the degree of destabilization and impoverishment which has characterized Africa’s once most prosperous state since the western intervention of 2011.

Such an occupation and bombing campaign will inevitably create even greater levels of disruption and dislocation. European participation derives in part from the desire to halt the influx of hundreds of thousands of migrants and refugees fleeing Africa, the Middle East and Asia stemming from the series of wars of destabilization and regime-change in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen.

The U.S. is following through on its efforts to enhance the military presence of the Africa Command (AFRICOM) which has thousands of troops on the continent and off its shores. Pentagon forces and contractors are building temporary bases, airstrips, intelligence gathering operations and forming partnerships with neo-colonial dominated regimes.

In Somalia, the U.S. provides substantial funding and coordination for the 22,000-member African Union Mission (AMISOM), along with the maintenance of drone operations and a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) field station. Flotillas of Pentagon warships are patrolling the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia, right across from Yemen, where it is waging a proxy war against the Islamic Republic of Iran through supporting an alliance led by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

These developments indicate that the militarism of Washington and Wall Street will continue throughout the remaining year of the Obama administration and into the reign of whoever takes control of the U.S. government in 2017.

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