

What Lies Ahead for Libya

The Lessons of History

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According to NATO, the final chapter of Gaddafi's Libya is being written now. The scenario is very similar to the final chapter for Yugoslavia -Milosevic- for Afghanistan -Mullah Omar- Iraq -Saddam Hussein- and for the "War on Terror" -bin Laden: eliminate The Bad Guy. In the future chapters of this neo-crusade, orthodox Christians will also be targeted, just as they were in the crusades from 1095-1291.

Although we don't know exactly how this "final chapter" will read, past experience serves as a handy guide -a trivial but effective approach. Remember Santayana: those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

After destroying the symbols of Gaddafi, there will be a ceremony celebrating the NATO victory. Everyone knows who will have brought him down. Will there be an aircraft carrier with Sarkozy, Cameron, Berlusconi, Obama (the Bankrupt Big Brother, BBB) and various bombardiers-in-chief declaring "Mission Accomplished" and lining up for promised oil contracts?

Hardly. Instead, the ceremony will be more European-style, like the meeting of top representatives from over 60 countries in Paris on 2 September, pledging to release frozen Libyan assets to the National Transition Council. Other meetings, like Petersburg I for Afghanistan, will draft a new constitution and set dates for free elections. Then, if he is captured alive, there will be the West's International Criminal Court routine for Gaddafi.

Before that, however, there will be a massive burning of Libyan uniforms by "loyalists" dressed up as civilians, preparing for the long-term. Then, after a month, a year, or maybe ten years, the roadside bombs will begin, along with the sabotage of pipelines and refineries. The Benghazi clan and its adherents will be unable to counter the Syrte clan and its adherents. The drift toward NATO occupation with ground forces, "to train the new Libyan army", of course, will begin. In short, the usual.

Let two basic points emerge from the fog of history -fog, we should note, only for those with impaired vision.

First, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya are artificial constructs by global architects obsessed with colouring in "nation- states" on world maps. They believe that the citizens of states with one colour constitute a "nation". When will they learn that these nations do not exist and that the blood of clans-tribes-ethnicities-races in highly heterogeneous we-cultures is thicker than the water of party ideology in homogeneous I-cultures. When will they see

that one person-one vote, free and fair elections work well in homogeneous I-cultures like Norway, Germany, Italy, and Japan, but not in heterogenous we-cultures, where the people will vote exclusively for their own clan-tribe-ethnicity-race. If you want to keep an artificial state in one piece, you must pay the price: heavy repression by a local dictator or a foreign occupier to contain centrifugal forces.

The second point: what is imposed by violence tends to lead to violence and repression, not democracy. Some will object: Wasn't democracy successfully imposed on Germany, Italy, and Japan after the Second World War. But there were important factors involved: all three were homogeneous, and two were I-cultures. All three had a tradition of electoral democracy and majority rule. And in all three, dictatorship and militarism did not emerge to keep disparate ethnic groups in check but for other reasons. The war restored what was previously there.

Is it a lost cause, then, this war against Gaddafi?

If the goal is "stable secular democracy", the answer is yes: war will only mobilise Islamists and clans and tribes and spark violence and endless bickering.

But if the key goal is a private, not state, central bank -already achieved by the Benghazi clan- then the cause is not lost. And if the goal was to kill an African Investment Bank in Syrte, Libya, an African Monetary Fund in Nigeria, an African federation, and an African currency in gold dinars, there is cause for celebration. To this end the Obama administration has already confiscated Libya's USD 30 billion of deposits in the US. And if the goal was to prevent Libya from emerging as the first African country to succeed in fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals, then start the fireworks.

In the meantime the Arab spring matures and has spread to Israel where there are massive protests against inequality. Rockets and attacks from Gaza under de facto occupation are deplorable but predictable. The late summer harvest has arrived: a changed Egypt as 30 years of truce with Israel are evaporating. There will be more.

But will the current US-Israel empire just be replaced by another one. As I wrote in 2009 in "The Fall of the US Empire", the Europeans-NATO will be the likely successors.

Will they do the job until the US recovers and resumes its position as the world's sheriff, capturing The Bad Guys, dead or alive?

Probably not. This fourth imperial scourge on the Middle East and North Africa (after the Ottoman Empire, then the West/Italy- England-France, then US-Israel) will probably be short. They are now saying, "Libya is not Iraq" just as they said "Iraq is not Vietnam", and there are differences, though there are also overwhelming similarities.

So what would come next? Maybe a decentralised Libya, promoting African unity, focusing more on its 500 sub-states than its 54 states, with rule by consensus for the many parts rather than the Western "winner takes all" model. That would be a much better solution.

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