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Civilized West and Libyan Nightmare

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In 2011 the West intervened into Libya going beyond the resolution N1973 of the United Nations Security Council. A nightmare followed. Now it looks like Europe has decided to tackle the burning problem. On May 18, EU ministers agreed to launch a sea and air mission that could in its later phases destroy vessels used by human traffickers. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg supported the decision. He said there had been no formal request for NATO involvement but that the alliance stood ready to play a role if asked. According to Federica

Mogherini, the EU has envisaged an operation that would start as a monitoring and intelligence-gathering one but could eventually deploy force at sea — and potentially on the Libyan coast— to capture and destroy smugglers' vessels, embarkation points and fuel dumps. There would be three phases in the naval operation, including intelligence gathering on smugglers, inspection and detection of smugglers' boats and destruction of those boats, the European Union's foreign policy chief explained. «It is not so much the destruction of the boats but the destruction of the business models of the smugglers networks themselves,» she said.

51 thousand migrants, mainly from Libya, have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe in 2015. According to the data of the United Nations, more than 1,800 migrants have died in the Mediterranean this year only. That is a 20-fold increase on the same period in 2014. The European Union plans to stop smugglers preventing them from getting far from the Libya's coast. In other words, Europe is not going to fight the evil it gave birth to, nor is it going to offer significant aid to suffering people. It wants to build a fence keeping immigrants away and thus do away with the problem. There is a possibility that this time the European Union will go around the United Nations Security Council. Formally no naval operation can take place in the territorial waters of Libya or any other state without the resolution of United Nations Security Council. Neither of Libya's rival governments, recognized or not, have yet shown any desire to co-operate with this plan. Both have so far criticized it. The Libya's internationally recognized government in Tobruk — which is fighting both a rival administration in Tripoli and the rising threat of Islamic State militants — opposes the naval plan and said Brussels must talk with it first. «The military option to deal with the boats inside Libyan waters or outside is not considered humane,» government spokesman Hatem el-Ouraybi said.

Libyans leave their country, which was prosperous once, in despair. The problems they face were engendered by nobody else but Europe which wants to isolate them now as if they were infected with leprosy. Refugees use small fishing boats. If destroyed, Libyan fishermen will suffer damage to exacerbate the problem of hunger in the country. Deutsche Welle believes the planned intervention will not help. The people left in Libya will eke out a miserable existence. There are indeed a lot of questions to be answered. Who will decide what a smuggler's boat is, and what isn't? Will the heads of smuggling syndicates be captured, or just their henchmen? And how will legal criminal prosecution be organized? Isn't there a danger that innocent civilians will die if EU troops intervene, especially on land in Libya? How will the EU protect itself against counterattacks? As time goes by, smugglers will find new ways to conduct their illegal activities.

The most important question of all is - can the use of arms really solve the refugee problem? The answer is clear: no. People who can no longer flee over the Mediterranean will end up stranded in Libya, under miserable conditions. After a while, migrants and smugglers will find new routes. By the way, Libya slid into its current state in part because of NATO's good intentions to help out during its civil war. A new EU military operation will do nothing to stabilize the situation. With the effects of such an operation on refugees, and on Libya, so impossible to calculate, the EU should keep its hands off.

The events unfolding inside Libya are dramatic enough. The country is partitioned into a few quasi-states.

Libya's south-western desert region of Fezzan, mainly populated by nomads declared itself an autonomous federal province in September 2013. The Western Mountains region that lies to the north of Mezzan has its own strong armed formations. Misrata (also spelled Misurata or Misratah) is the third largest city in northwestern Libya situated to the east of Tripoli on the Mediterranean coast near Cape Misrata. Isolated from the rest of the country the city is thriving. The territory is surrounded by check points. Outsiders are let in only upon the request of Misrata residents. Oil guards (with headquarters in Ajdabiya) protect oil facilities in Sirte.

Benghazi has declared itself an autonomous region. It is ruled by transitional National Council of Cyrenaica. According to French expert Fabrice Balanche, Libya follows the way of «somalization». A failed state is getting apart as a result of fighting between rival armed groups. Like in Somalia they have heavy weapons. The country is facing political schism, the regular military is weak, the separatist sentiments are strong in the regions, the legal government is impotent, there are no security guarantees and the influence of radical Islam is growing. The country is torn by ethnic and tribal conflicts. The fight for control of hydrocarbons is raging between different groups. The weapons from military storage facilities or received from NATO countries have spread around Libya. Armed militants rule the country. The Libyan Prime Minister, Ali Zeidan, has been kidnapped. Released in a few hours he told that the people who took away his money, clothes, cell phone and important documents were members of parliament. Libyans ask each other «How can the Prime Minister protect the country if he can't protect himself?» If the chairman of National Congress and ministers say they don't rule the country, then who does? The Islamic State takes advantage of the situation to make more gains. François Fillon, who was French Prime Minister at the time the intervention took place in 2011, admits that France took part in the operation in Libya that destroyed the country and spread around the infection across the whole Sahel. 4 Libya's Islamist militants are now fighting for control of the entire country, and they are making headway. In April 2014, they captured a secret military base near Tripoli that, ironically, U.S. special operations forces had established in the summer of 2012 to train Libyan counterterrorist forces. The Islamic State militant formations have entered the Sirte Basin Province of Libya. The situation makes remember the event in Iraq. The Islamic State became much stronger there after many former officers of Saddam Hussein's army joined its ranks. If former Gaddafi officers followed their example, Libya could become the first country to fully fall under the Islamic State's control and become part of the new caliphate the Islamic militants want to found. The fight of European countries against Libyan refugees will expedite the process making it spill over the boundaries of the Middle East. Libya is turning into a new strategic stronghold of the Islamic State to be used for further expansion in North Africa or attacking Europe across the Mediterranean. Obama was proud to say that after the Gaddafi's overthrow the mission was accomplished without boots on the ground, «Without a single US service member on the ground we achieved our objectives,» he said. Ivo Daalder, former U.S. Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and James Stavridis, a retired United States Admiral who served as the Commander, US European Command and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, wrote in their piece published by Foreign Policy in the March/April 2012 issue that the «NATO's operation in Libya has rightly been hailed as a model intervention». There are other opinions. Alan J. Kuperman of Texas University says «...in retrospect, Obama's intervention in Libya was an abject failure, judged even by its own standards. Libya has not only failed to evolve into a democracy; it has devolved into a failed state. Violent deaths and other human rights abuses have increased severalfold».

The situation has gone too far. The officials of international organizations believe that an intervention by the West to support the legitimate government would take place too late. Andrew Engel-Bernardino León, U.N. special envoy for Libya, thinks Libya is too close to total chaos and the arms deliveries won't turn the tide. According to him, «Weapons delivered to a central government lacking official armed forces could be diverted to the various armed groups that have, since 2011, undermined the emergence of a strong unity government in the first place. An influx of weapons to Libya could also exacerbate terrorism-related security challenges facing Libya's neighbor».

Summing it all up, these are the results of the West's mission to make Libya a civilized state.