



Centre International de Recherches et d'Etudes sur le Terrorisme
& l'Aide aux victimes du Terrorisme

CIRET-AVT



LIBYA: AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

**Report on a Fact Finding Mission
to Assess Both Sides of the Libyan Conflict**

Paris, May 2011

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors of this report thank all the Libyans who agreed to meet them and answer their questions, in both sides of the country, as well as the diplomatic personnel, those responsible for the intelligence services, the members of humanitarian organisations and the journalists of the international press who co-operated with them.

INTRODUCTION

Organized on the initiative of the '**Centre international de recherche and et d'études sur le terrorisme et d'aide aux victimes du terrorisme**' (CIRET-AVT¹) [International Center for the Study and Research into Terrorism and assistance to the victims of Terrorism] and the '**Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement**' (CF2R²) [French Center for Intelligence Studies] and with the support of the '**Forum pour la paix en Méditerranée**'³ [Mediterranean Peace Forum], a delegation of international experts arrived to tour Tripoli and the Tripolitana from 31st March to 6th April, then to Benghazi and Cyrenaica (19th to 25th April) in order to evaluate the Libyan situation independently, without bias and to meet representatives of both sides.

Such a venture in the context of the Libyan crisis is unique to date.

The delegation was composed of the following individuals.

- **Mrs Sayda Benhabylès** (Algeria), ex minister of the Solidarity, ex senator, founder member of CIRET-AVT, Prize winner of the United Nations for Civil Society ;
- **Mrs Roumiana Ougartchinska** (France/Bulgaria), writer, investigative journalist ;
- **Prefect Yves Bonnet** (France), former member of the French parliament, ex director of the Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire (DST, French Security Service), President of CIRET-AVT ;
- **Mr Dirk Borgers** (Belgium) independent expert ;
- **Mr Eric Denécé** (France), director of the French Centre for Intelligence Studies (CF2R) ;
- **Mr André Le Meignen** (France) independent expert, vice-president of CIRET-AVT.

The principles that guided the work of the delegation are as follows:

- Adherence to democratic principles: freedom, the rights of man and woman, resistance to oppression such as those declared in the acts and decisions of NATO,
- The security and safety of the civilian population,
- Neutrality in the conflict,
- Prohibition of the promotion of national interests,
- Opposition to any foreign military intervention that exceeds international law or that founded on a false right of interference in contradiction to the founding principle of the UN Charter,
- Outlining of the facts without prejudice,
- With a sharp critical sense.

On this last point, it is worth remembering that the delegation, because of its composition, benefitted from an extensive and profound expertise into the analysis and the unscrambling of disinformation in crisis situations. During its mission, in a conflict that was more media hype than purely military, the delegation was careful to maintain awareness of the risk of being manipulated by its contacts. It maintained a distance from the participants of the uprising as well as the regime acolytes in Tripoli.

¹ <http://www.ciret-avt.com>

² <http://www.cf2r.org>

³ <http://www.mpforum.org>

Finally the mission was able to be autonomous in Arabic speaking land, with regards to translation, thanks to the presence and availability of Mrs Benhabyles, whom all the delegation would like to thank.

Note

This report covers the events up to 30th April 2011.

Map of Libya



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INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY	7
1. The Libyan Regime	8
Structure of the Libyan State	8
Nature of the Libyan State	8
Originality of the Libyan socio-economic model	9
The support to African countries	10
Institutional Development	11
2. The Libyan Army and the 'Mercenaries'	12
The Armed Forces	12
The 'Mercenaries'	13
3. Causes of the Revolt	14
A specific context	14
Irredentism of Eastern Libya	14
The role of social networks	15
The role of the media and the staging of the conflict	15
4. The Events	16
The Uprising	16
Events in the East	16
Events in the West	18
First lessons	19
5. The Fighting	19
The battle of Misrata stakes	20
6. The Consequences of the Conflict	21
The flight of foreign communities	21
The humanitarian situation	21
7. The Insurgents and the TNC	21
A mixed group	22
The influence of the Sanusi Monarchists	22
Questionable Leaders	23
Political objectives of the TNC	23
Military strategy of the TNC	25
The TNC prisoners	26
TNC Propaganda	26
Foreign support to the TNC	27

8. NATO'S Actions	27
The results of air strikes	27
Collateral damages	28
Limits of NATO's air strikes	28
Observations of the delegation	29
Reactions of the Libyan people to the bombing	29
A vague and imprecise UN resolution	29
9. Actions of Western Intelligence Services	30
Undercover support operations	30
The assassination attempts on Gaddafi	31
10. International Strategies	32
The US strategy	32
The interests of some other players	32
11. France's Position	33
Reasons for the French involvement	33
Dangerous illusions	34
Cost of the conflict	35
12. The Terrorist Threat	35
The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group	35
Cyrenaica, land of Jihadists	36
LIFG's involvement in the conflict	37
Al Qaeda's statements	37
The responses of the TNC	38
A new regional terrorist base ?	38
13. The Future of the 'Revolution'	39

SUMMARY

It is hardly necessary to emphasise the nature of the dictatorship imposed, since 1969, by Muammar Gaddafi upon his populace. In the light of such a situation, nothing is more understandable than the wish to have more freedom and democracy.

Nonetheless the study undertaken of the facts leads us to confirm that the Libyan 'revolution' is neither democratic, nor spontaneous. It consists of an armed uprising in the Eastern part of the country, driven by revenge and rebellion, which attempts to pass itself off as part of the 'Arab Spring' which it in no way derives from. The Libyan insurgency cannot therefore be compared to the popular uprisings of Tunisia and Egypt.

More alarmingly, the TNC (Transitional National Council) is found to be a coalition of disparate elements with divergent interests, whose only common viewpoint is their opposition to the existing regime.

The true democrats therein are only a minority and must live alongside ex members of Colonel Gaddafi's government, those who want the return of the monarchy and those who want to implement radical Islam.

Consequently the TNC does not offer any guarantee for the future in spite of the democrats wishes, since the other factions will definitely steer the Council towards their own objectives.

Overall Libya is the only country of the 'Arab spring' in which the Islamic risk is increased. The Cyrenaica is an area of the Arab world that has sent the most jihadists to fight the Americans in Iraq.

It seems therefore that the Western powers have demonstrated a shameful adventurism by involving themselves in this crisis, unless it results from a completely cynical Machiavellianism. That which was supposed to be an easy victory has turned into a semi- failure, that only the media conceal, because of the inconsistency of the rebels. The stalemate of the actions of the insurgents leaves the western nations only two possibilities; an inglorious retreat or an intensified involvement in the conflict, that involves sending in ground forces.

The Western intervention is in the process of creating more problems than it solves. It risks destabilising all North Africa, the Sahara, the near east, and assisting in the emergence of a new type of radical Islam or even terrorism in Cyrenaica.

The coalition may succeed perhaps in removing the Libyan leader. But the West must beware that his replacement may result in a more radical and even less democratic regime.

1. THE LIBYAN REGIME

Structure of the Libyan State

Libya is a state with a tribal structure in which the central power 'unites' the country. The distribution between the tribes is the basis of society, which distinguishes this country from its two neighbours Tunisia and Egypt. Tribal loyalties play a key part in Libyan politics.

Gaddafi's regime is based on an alliance of the small Kadhafa tribe, to which he belongs, with two of the largest tribes of the country; the Warfalla, based principally in the Tripolitana, and the Magarha, of the Fezzan. Gaddafi, as in the tribal African regimes, has his followers ready to support him to the end.

Even if the four decades of power of Gaddafi have permitted a national sentiment to take shape, the Libyans primarily recognise themselves by their tribal structure.

All the tribes today are spread throughout the country because of the on-going intermingling of the population. This is also why one finds members of the Benghazi tribes in the towns of the west of Libya. This social mobility can explain why uprisings against the regime emerged at points across the country.

Nature of the Libyan State

The Libya of Gaddafi is an authoritarian regime which has for a long time had close links with the Palestinian movement, and is made up of elements which participated in international terrorism. This assertion, held mostly to be correct, is worth looking at with some reservations. If the majority of international players assert that the regime is active in international terrorism, in admitting its responsibility for the two attacks on DC10 of UTA and Lockerbie¹, certain well established experts have voiced doubts as to the involvement of the Libyan services in these two operations².

Certainly, Muammar Gaddafi did compensate the families of the victims of these two attacks, which was assumed by all to be an admission of liability. But other experts state that the 'Guide', as he is known in Libya, under international pressure, knew that the truth could not come out, and bought peace by payment. This way of acting is typical of a reasoning that distinguishes between responsibility and blame. The Libyan Guide has this dichotomy, a typical Eastern awareness of the price of a human life, which allows the paying off of the relatives and victims- in hard cash- without admitting liability. Moreover Muammar Gaddafi did not hesitate to pay for the release of hostages according to the same principle, as was done in the times of the Barbary pirates. He proceeded also like this with the ethnologist Françoise Claustre by paying the ransom to Hissen Habre, and with the hostages of the Ile the Jolo.

Overall Gaddafi behaves mainly like an African Head of State or an Arab one. He is tyrannical, unpredictable, and power hungry.

¹ Abdallah Senoussi, brother-in-law of Muammar Gaddafi, chief of the intelligence services, has been accused and charged for the Lockerbie bombing. He was mentioned in the court procedure.

² Cf. Claude Silberzahn, ex-director of the DGSE (French intelligence service). Cf. Pierre Péan, *"Manipulations Africaines"*, Plon, Paris, 2001.

The Gaddafi regime spans 42 years of injustice and restrictions on freedom. In February 2011, the situation in the country was at a standstill. In contrast with Tunisia and Egypt, there was no place for political parties, trade unions, independent media, and civic society was almost nonexistent. The opposition was non-existent. The country lived under surveillance with arbitrary detentions. Political reform was a necessity. This could only result in an explosion of violence.

The Gaddafi regime continued to focus the country on their leader, engendering a phenomenon of insularity. Overseas journeys were few as was the teaching of foreign languages to the young, who do not speak them, apart from those who have emigrated. In the same way the development of a civic society was held back considerably by the system put in place 40 years ago by Muammar Gaddafi. He said, only last year, that such an emergence would not make sense in Libya; in a country where the people already have all the power, there could not exist a social entity opposed to those same people. This socio-political view opposed the emergence of future leaders at the heart of the opposition.

Originality of the Libyan socio-economic model

If the Libyan leader is without doubt a dictator and the population's situation with regards to the exercise of democratic rights is not ideal, the socio economic situation is exceptional in the context of the African scale.

Gaddafi has truly developed his country, in contrast to the African despots of the Sahel, even if he and those close to him were greatly enriched after his arrival to power. The redistribution of government income, although unequal, allowed peace to reign.

In 1969 when Gaddafi came to power, by a coup which overthrew the monarchy, the Libyan people were one of the poorest in the world with an annual income per inhabitant of less than sixty dollars.

Today, thanks to the 'Arab socialism' of the government and the petroleum wealth, Libya enjoys one of the highest standards of living in the Arab world, and the highest in Africa. Most Libyan families own their own home and most own a car.

The public health service is free, and is one of the best in the Arab world, as is education, also free and widely open to women.

Hospitals and pharmacies are of European standards and any costs incurred abroad are paid for by the State. Also in the context of the sad episode of the 475 Libyan children infected by Aids in Benghazi, allegedly caused by Bulgaria nurses, the Libyan Government paid all the medical expenses and the families relocation expenses, travel abroad, medicines. Today these Benghazi families say they do not have the means anymore to look after their children. Free cancer treatments are no longer available to them in Benghazi.

The country has public and urban equipment of good quality. Roads are well kept; many buildings were being constructed at the start of the insurgency, as can be seen by the building sites that are now closed.

The regime is also the founder of the development of the Petroleum Industry, such as the refinery at Brega. It also started large programmes of infrastructure building in the industrial and agricultural sectors, including the massive project of the 'Great River' mainly completed. The presence in Libya of the heads of leading construction companies, like the Canadian Lavalin and the French Bouygues, enabled this large scale modernisation effort, exceptional in Arab lands.

Translated into statistics and briefings the socio economic situation in Libya is as follows: under the Monarchy, it was one of the poorest countries in the world. Today it is ranked 53 in the world index of human development, ahead of Russia, Brazil, Ukraine and Venezuela. It is considered the most developed country in Africa.

In Tunisia and Egypt, the youth revolted since they had no work. In Libya, in contrast, the economy attracted three million immigrant workers. Unemployment was nonexistent and the standard of living was good with reference to international standards.

The support to African countries

A fact often ignored is that Libya has been a major contributor in the development of the independence of the African continent.

Gaddafi enabled Africa to experience a veritable technological revolution, thanks to the financing of the first African communication satellite. This asset enabled the whole continent to link by telephone, to enable the transmission of television and radio programmes, in addition to many other technological applications such as tele-medicine (remote diagnosis) and distance learning and education. Thanks to the radio transmissions of WMAX, a low cost connection was put in place across the continent including rural areas.

All this started in 1992, when 45 African countries create RASCOM (regional organisation of African satellite communications) so that Africa could have its own satellite to reduce the costs of communication in the continent. Before then telecommunication equipment destined for Africa was the most expensive in the world, since they used the European satellites for which the charges are very high.

After 14 years of attempts the African states managed to obtain a loan from the World Bank, the IMF and the US and Europe, the Libyan Leader took charge of this project and put \$300 million in, to enable the project to go ahead. The African Bank of development put in \$50 million and the Bank of development of Africa and the West \$27 million. That is how Africa obtained its first satellite for telecommunications on 26 December 2007. China and Russia then accepted to share their technology which allowed the launching of satellites for South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, and Algeria. A second communication satellite was launched into orbit in July 2010.

At the Inter-African institutional level 15% of the budget of the African Union is provided by Libya, this explains the reluctance of this organisation to condemn Gaddafi, in contrast to the Arab League, which hates him.

During his time in power, the generosity of the Libyan leader extended to South Africa and Liberia, Madagascar and the countries of the Sahel. He also financed administrative buildings, hotels, restaurants, organisations of all kinds, Islamic organisations, a network of petrol distribution, (via the Libyan National Oil Company), shops, entertainment events – like the Malian Festival of the Desert - and often, opposition groups. In Mali, the national television was finance mostly during the 1980's by Libya which recently also build some government infrastructure whilst discreetly supporting the Tuareg rebellion. The Libyan regime made itself a specialist in the organising of negotiations between enemies or adversaries and has played the good mediator role as in the freeing of Françoise Claustre (1977) and that of the hostages of the Jolo island (2000).

Therefore the Tripoli regime is actively supported by many who owe it a debt and by those who benefitted from its political, financial or military support.

One of its greatest successes is in its alliance with the Tuaregs whom it protected and financed during the repression of their movement by Mali in the 1990's.

It was the talks at Oubari in 1981 which paved the way for relations between the different politico- military movements of the Tuaregs in Libya. One of the decisions announced was the approach of the Libyan military to young Touaregs so as to teach them the use of arms. This support to the Tuaregs is the origin of many differences with Algeria, Mali and Niger.

Gaddafi was also in the news in 2005, when he granted to all the Nigerian Tuaregs and Malians on his land, a residency permit card of unlimited stay. Then in 2006 he called the tribes of the Sahara, including the Tuaregs, to join together as a group to oppose terrorism and drug trafficking.

This is the reason that some of the fighters come from Niger and Mali; they came to help Gaddafi, as they felt they had a blood debt to him. This delegation met some of them.

Institutional Development

During the last few years, conscious of the changes in the socio economic situation and Libya's outdated institutions, Gaddafi, under the influence of his son Saif al Islam, decided to make changes to the regime previously stuck in its authoritarianism, notably with the formation of the "Gaddafi Foundation for Development". Saif al Islam has appeared since 2003 as a modernist embodying the hopes of those for an opening into democracy.

The public relations campaign was entrusted, between 2000-2008, to an American company, Monitor Group, in order to let people know that the regime wanted to change and develop. Libya then needed help to develop its institutions and modernize its economy. After decades of isolation, those in business, citizens, the government and intellectual elites looked to deepen their knowledge of ideas and modern practices in the world.

Also in 2006 Saif al Islam freed almost two thousand Islamic political prisoners. In 2006, at the same time, the regime gave a number of proofs of its willingness to establish new relationships in partnership with Western countries.

With regards to migratory flows the agreements made with Italy bore fruit, because the arrival of migrants on the shores of the peninsula diminished by 90%. Notably thanks to the reinforcement of maritime means of control, with small ships, given to Tripoli by Rome.

Gaddafi also proceeded to destroy his weapons of mass destruction, renounced terrorism indemnified victims of such acts, attributed to the regime, and finally released the Bulgarian nurses.

Moreover he developed a strong cooperation with the West in the fight against Al Qaeda. According to a report in 2008 by the State Department, *'the Libyan government has continued to cooperate with the United States and the international community to fight against terrorism and its financing' ...the intelligence services hope to lend their assistance to Libya with reference to counterterrorism during the years, 2010 and 2011'*.

In 2009 Libyan Intelligence and the CIA, within the scope of an agreement negotiated by Moussa Koussa, put in place a joint programme on counterterrorism. The

American agents therefore trained some professionals in the Libyan Intelligence. These practical measures of cooperation do not normally happen except with intelligence services between whom there is total confidence. Moreover, the Libya intelligence accepted, in response to a request from MI5 and MI6, to infiltrate agents into the Islamic fundamentalists in London, this sealed the reconciliation.

Finally the project of establishing a Constitution, breaking radically with the precepts of the Green book was underway, directed with the help of eminent foreign individuals, members of the Gaddafi Foundation; the professors Joseph Nye (USA) Francis Fukuyama (USA) Benjamin Barber (USA) and Tony Giddens (UK).

So the regime, despite its dubious past, was ready to evolve. Gaddafi was about to announce the new reforms when the 'revolution' interrupted everything.

As if in a carefully prepared move, the 'revolutionary' movement was started on the 12th to 13th February 2011. Realising the danger, the government announced as of the 17th February, several measures to calm things down, for example by offering money to the population, and sent many representatives to different areas.

On 2nd March Gaddafi announced his reforms which gave a greater place to civic society, he relaxed the legislative law and the Supreme Court published a declaration of principles. But the uprising did not diminish.

It seems that some advisors around the Guide then advised him to respond with force to break the spirit of the insurgents. The question is who exactly were those individuals around Gaddafi who had an interest in worsening the situation?

2. THE LIBYAN ARMY AND THE MERCENARIES

The Armed Forces

The Libyan government has always been careful not to allow a large, powerful professional army to be established. They prefer to rely for the security of the regime on the system of tribal militias organized by revolutionary committees.

The Libyan Army consists of about 50,000 men, of whom only 10,000 are properly trained, equipped, paid and motivated. These forces are most loyal to the regime, divided into four brigades, notably the 32 mechanized brigade commanded by Khamis Gaddafi, son of the Leader, which is 4,000 men strong, well-equipped in tanks, armoured troop transport vehicles and self propelled artillery.

The rest of the army is organised into 10 battalions with armour plated vehicles, 10 mechanized battalions, 18 infantry battalions and six commando battalions to which must be added 22 battalions of Artillery. Before the crisis the arsenal of the Libyan Army was substantial with 500 tanks, (T-72, T-62, and T-55), 1,500 diverse armoured vehicles and 2,000 pieces of artillery stop it also comprise several dozen assault helicopters. As with the air force these assets were considerably reduced during the years of embargo, bad maintenance and a number of defections. Nonetheless there remain enough to fully equip a force of tens of thousands of men. Even though short of training and weakened by the desertion of some of its units, this army is technically and tactically superior to the rebels, who do not have any individual or collective military competence.

The air force of 18,000 personnel before the NATO campaign, consisted of about 100 combat aircraft (mig 21/23, SU 24, etc), without counting the helicopters. It should

be noted that some pilots were of Serb origin, the Navy has 8,000 personnel and a number of their small tonnage vessels play a minor role in the operational plan. In addition to the military, there is the police force, whose number is not known, and different local militias run by the tribal chiefs.

During the fighting there were no desertions from the Libyan forces loyal to the regime, even during the time when they could make no progress at Misrata/Abadija. This is explained by the recruitment of troops from tribes loyal to Gaddafi, notably the Kadhafa.

The 'Mercenaries'

Much has been written about 'mercenaries' serving in the Libyan Army but little is accurate. In fact the practice of using of mercenaries is longstanding. For several decades foreigners have served the regime close to military units or armed militias. Their impact on the operational plan remains limited.

At the end of the 1970's, the Colonel created an Islamic Legion that would intervene in the whole continent in which he dreamed of creating the United States of Africa. After the events in Chad in 1987 this unit was disbanded.

During recent years new recruitment of foreigners has been undertaken. This phenomenon is in line with what one finds at all levels of the Libyan economic life. A high proportion of workers are foreigners.

Currently the recruits are mainly Malian, Tchadian, Nigerian, Congolese and Sudanese. Even if their salary does not reach the \$2,000 announced by media propaganda, it still is of consequence compared to the pitiful salaries they have in their countries of origin.

The information emanating from the rebel forces who decry these foreign intruders is vague, and should be treated with caution. At the beginning of April the insurgents said that they had captured three Algeria mercenaries in Adjdabiya and had killed three of them during fighting in that town. The spokesperson for the rebels immediately accused Algeria of assisting Gaddafi, claiming that this country 'turning a blind eye' on the arrival of the mercenaries.

Jennifer Rubin, of the Washington Post, citing an ex-member of the regime now gone over to the opposition, wrote that 450 mercenaries from the Sahara were involved in the suppression of the insurgents. They came from camps in Tindouf in Algeria where members of the Polisario are based which implies the complicity of Algeria. These fighters, according to the Washington Post are paid \$10,000 for two months tour of duty, that level of pay is simply not believable. Moreover, the Polisario has rejected these accusations.

What can be confirmed and the mission encountered them, is that the Touregs of the Niger came in May to Tripoli to offer their support to Gaddafi. Their coming there is a debt of honor and is spontaneous. They say that they number 30,000, which is somewhat exaggerated. The mission was able to meet some of their leaders who were staying at the hotel Corinthia in Tripoli.

In truth, the effect of these foreign fighters is difficult to evaluate. The figures that are bandied about are exaggerated, up to 6,000 according to some sources, and it appears that a deliberate confusion is made about the Libyan fighters and genuine volunteers from other countries. Whatever their number is, they do not constitute more than a very small part of the Libyan forces.

3. CAUSES OF THE REVOLT

A specific context

The genesis of the Libyan revolution appears to have been due to the conjunction of several phenomena :

- The regional context, due to the 'Arab spring' which appealed for demonstrations to obtain more freedoms
- The situation specifically in Libya, and in particular the East of the country
- External influences ;

In Tunisia, social discontent played a large role in the eruption of discontent. The same in Egypt, the economic and social problems were of major importance.

In Libya, the regime, thanks to the oil resources, proceeded to distribute the wealth, even if it was somewhat unequal. Before the crisis the country produced 1.5 million barrels per day. Its reserves are estimated at a value of 150 billion dollars, for a population of six million people. This collective wealth linked to an ambitious social policy, resulted in a consequence, unusual in Africa; the Libyans refused to do work they considered 'demeaning'. The young people who finished their studies refused work below their status. They wanted well paid office jobs, a comfortable apartment, and a new car. The government was therefore forced to import a large number of foreign workers, hundreds of thousands, to do the work the Libyans refused to do.

Irredentism of Eastern Libya

Cyrenaica has always been reluctant to accept the dominion of The Tripolitana, the authority of Colonel Gaddafi- even though he took a wife from there- was never accepted: the influence of the old Sanusi (Senoussi) monarchy as well as that of the Muslim Brotherhood persisted and manifested regularly as demonstrations.

Benghazi is known as a base of religious extremism. The Cyrenaica has an Islamist tradition going back to the time of the Senoussi brotherhood. Integration is much less marked than in the West of the country: the women, fully veiled, do not drive and their social life is reduced to a minimum. At the heart of the populace, bearded men dominate, often marked on their forehead with the black sign of piety.

Finally, a little known fact, Benghazi has become, over the course of the last fifteen years, the epicentre of African migration to Europe. This human traffic was transformed into a vast industry, turning over billions of dollars. A parallel mafia type world developed in the town where the trafficking was deeply rooted and employed thousands of people in all areas, not without corrupting the police and officials. It is only a year ago that the Libyan government with the assistance of Italy was able to control this cancer.

With the disappearance of its 'business' and the arrest of a number of its leaders, the local mafia was ready to finance and to support the Libyan rebellion. Numerous gangs and members of the underworld emerged from the shadows and are known to have carried out punitive assaults against the African immigrants in Benghazi and its suburbs. Since the start of the insurgency hundreds of immigrant travellers, Sudanese,

Somaliens, Éthiopiens, et Érythréens ont été volés et assassinés par les milices rebelles. Ce fait est soigneusement caché par les médias internationaux.

The role of social networks

En Tunisie et en Égypte, le rôle de l'internet et des réseaux sociaux (*Facebook* et *Twitter*) a souvent été mentionné. Ce n'est pas le cas en Libye.

À l'origine, Facebook a été utilisé par Saïf al-Islam comme un moyen de diffuser de nouvelles idées dans la société libyenne. Mais les événements ont dépassé son contrôle. Peu à peu, la pression a augmenté dans les blogs et les réseaux sociaux; des appels à démonstration ont été lancés, suivant le même modèle que celui utilisé en Tunisie et en Égypte. Ils ont rapidement rassemblé des centaines, voire des milliers de partisans.

Leur impact a certainement été réduit en Libye car l'utilisation d'internet n'y est pas très développée comme dans les pays voisins, mais cette diffusion a été suffisante pour perturber le gouvernement libyen, car elle a été renforcée et amplifiée par les stations satellites, notamment celles arabes. Il ne faut pas oublier que la grande manifestation du 17 février est devenue la date officielle de la 'révolution' et a été lancée par un appel aux réseaux sociaux.

The role of the media and the staging of the conflict

En Libye, les chaînes arabes (*Al Jazeera* et *Al-Arabia*) sont plus regardées que les chaînes libyennes, qui sont perçues comme stables et formelles. La couverture des événements en Libye par les chaînes satellites est l'objet de certaines observations critiques. Jusqu'à la fin de février, les villes de l'ouest de la Libye ont connu de fortes tensions et certaines attaques - celles de l'est étaient moins nombreuses - mais ces événements ont été exagérés et déformés de manière simple et directe. Par exemple, les médias internationaux ont diffusé des affirmations selon lesquelles les forces armées du régime ont bombardé Tripoli, ce qui est faux; aucune bombe n'est tombée sur la capitale, même si des affrontements ont eu lieu dans certaines zones.

La même erreur a été délibérément commise lorsque les médias arabes et l'Occident ont affirmé que le régime tirait sur sa propre population. Cette affirmation n'a été vérifiée et n'a pas été prouvée. *Al Jazeera* était à Tripoli, ses journalistes, souvent occidentaux, ont voyagé sans encombre par le régime.

La conséquence de cette désinformation est évidente; la résolution 1973 de l'ONU a été votée sur la base de cette désinformation de la presse, et sans aucune enquête préalable pour vérifier les faits. Il n'est pas exagéré de dire que *Al Jazeera* a créé l'événement qui a influencé l'ONU. La médiocratie autour de cette situation est étonnamment similaire à ce qui s'est passé dans les Balkans en 1991, au détriment de la Serbie.

4. THE EVENTS

The Uprising

The movement started the 12th and 13th February 2011. The Libyan uprising- in spite of its popular appearance at the outset- does not represent the majority of the population and is made up of diverse individuals with different, often contradictory, interests: on the one hand, an element of popular and democratic desire, tired of the dictatorship of Gaddafi; on the other hand the Eastern clans, annoyed at the unequal sharing of the country's riches; finally the Islamists.

Even more surprising, this movement is led by ex ministers of the regime (Mustapha Abdu Jalil and Abdul Fatah Younis), who in the past violated human rights and who seem to be motivated mainly by their desire to gain power.

If the Tunisian and Egyptian 'revolutions' were 'unarmed revolts', in the case of Libya, the revolt quickly challenged the military forces and rapidly developed into an insurgency and then into a civil war.

In all the towns visited, all the symbols of the Government regime were wrecked, police stations, law courts, town halls, barracks, prisons, etc. In contrast little damage or looting to urban buildings was found. For reasons of revenge, summary public executions were carried out by the rebels.

Faced with this situation the Libyan government could legitimately respond with force. It tried therefore to slowly retake control, without decisive action. The 'local militias' of the regime had never before experienced being under fire and were slow to react to a revolt which spread quickly.

The Libyan government finally managed to organise a counter offensive against the insurgents. The rebels, mostly young men with no military experience and badly armed, were chased out of the town centres. Contrary to what the media announced, our visits to the towns did not show signs of intense fighting, due perhaps to a holding back of the army or the weakness of the opposing, armed rebels.

The unfolding of the revolution was very different in the East - where it was all over in a few days and where the forces of law and order fled quickly - in the West, the rebel attacks lasted longer before being brought under control.

Events in the East

In **Benghazi**, on February 12th, the people's uprising was led and directed by a lawyer. After his arrest by Libyan police, the populace, egged on by three to four hundred activists, emerged again on the 15th February -two days before the demonstrations named by social media - and started to attack the police stations, the barracks and the public buildings.

Two professors of the University of Benghazi,- met fortuitously in Djerba - told us that they saw surge out of the University 'students' whom they had never before seen and who led the demonstration. These 'students' threatened and assaulted the professors who would not take part in their actions and did not approve of their slogans.

These professors, deeply concerned for their safety, did not want to give us to publish their names.

From the start of the demonstrations, Islamists and criminals took advantage of the situation by attacking the high security prisons on the outskirts of Benghazi where their friends were locked up. After the freeing of these men, the mob attacked the police stations and the official buildings, and the inhabitants of the town woke to see the bodies of police officers hanging by the neck from bridges.

Many abuses and assaults also took place on black Africans who were all accused of being 'mercenaries', evictions, murders, imprisonment, and torture. These terrible actions and the fact that Gaddafi had helped their countries in the past were the reasons why many African countries strongly supported him.

During the first few days the efforts to regain control were carried out without using excess force, subsequently the forces of law and order fired over the heads of the mob and on the next day shot at them. There were some deaths and a number of wounded, as the French doctors working in the hospital there were able to confirm.

Tobruk - 4th largest town of the country, with around 170,000 inhabitants - an Islamic fiefdom, was taken over quickly, a few days after the start of the action in Benghazi. Traces of fire fights are minimal.

On the 17th February a spontaneous, at first, demonstration took place, started by some youths who were following the movement in Benghazi. This grew stronger on the second day. The police fired on the demonstrators (3 to 4 victims) then a general revolt took place with the demonstrators firing shotguns. In view of the attitude of the locals and the local tribes, the heads of the police and security forces decided to flee, leaving their men and arms behind (the local garrison was mainly staffed by locals who did not fire on the crowd). Before leaving those loyal to Gaddafi blew up the munitions depots.

If the younger people (20-40 years old) were in at the start of the events, then the control was quickly taken back by the older men. The chiefs of the tribes of Toubruk met soon and took over the town and played a central role; creating local committees for security, emergencies, for women, the young, etc.

Very few volunteers left Tobruk to fight against the forces loyal to Gaddafi, even though it is said that the inhabitants of this town, all of Bedouin origin, are more courageous than the citizen of Benghazi.

At **Derna** - approximately 90,000 inhabitants, the main Islamic fiefdom of Cyrenaica - on the 15th February, as in Tobruk, about 25 students from the university decided to demonstrate. The professors tried to dissuade them but to no avail. The local members of the TNC we met during the course of our visit- amongst them three French professors at the university- claimed that *Facebook* played a central role in the outbreak of the events.

From the second day of demonstrations, the police opened fire, killing five and wounding ten. The revolt then immediately increased. Faced with the size of the opposition the police fled. The demonstrators then seized the police station and other public buildings and set fire to them.

After the takeover of the town, the inhabitants organised themselves into committees as in Tobruk. Then a group of students and teachers left to fight with the insurgents.

Our hosts took us to visit the community room, within the walls of the mosque at Derna, dedicated to the 'victims of Gaddafi'. However this exhibition also includes

victims of the fighting in Chad, (80's) the American bombing of 1986 and the previous revolts against the regime, in 1996, and the events of February 2011.

Finally, we noted in the town many mural graffiti – well drawn with very clichéd comments- definitely not spontaneous, aimed at foreign visitors, or journalists, written in French, English and Turkish.

Events unfolded - again - according to the same scenario, in **Al Baida**, a town of 90,000 inhabitants, with a Prefecture of 200,000. On Wednesday 16th February, about fifteen youths from school and some students started a demonstration against the government, during the continuing events in Benghazi. On the 17th there was a march joined by various participants from the poorer quarters, chanting for the departure of Gaddafi. The police opened fire and two youths were killed. In response a sit in was organised.

Prior to Friday prayers, reinforcements from the army arrive in the town. The forces of law and order start to fire rubber bullets first and later real ones. It is thought 17 died, men from age 17-40. The inhabitants of Al Baida claim they saw African mercenaries within the army forces.

The youth were later joined by police offers and soldiers who defected. These armed the demonstrators against the 'mercenaries'. On Friday they arrived at Sharat, an air base and garrison town, to besiege it. The loyalist troops resisted, thanks to reinforcements from Al Baida. The fighting went on for two days until the insurgents won and took the barracks. The region was taken over on the 20th February.

There are no figures on the loss of life for the army or police, but we know that 272 soldiers were there. According to the TNC they were well treated, thanks to tribal intervention. The dead and the military prisoners were sent to their families. The arms seized were sent to Benghazi.

The revolt in Al Baida lasted six day from 15th to 20th February, three days of fighting. There were 64 dead amongst the insurgents during those days. Afterwards the TNC claimed they did not see any spying or attempts at destabilisation from the government in Tripoli.

Events in the West

Until the end of February, in Tripolitana, the insurgency enjoyed favourable conditions: not only did they take Misrata, which is 220 kilometres from Tripoli, but it grew in the cities of Zouara and Ziaouia (also known as Zawiya).

However in the Tripolitana the rebellion was only supported by a minority of the population.

The insurgency in **Ziaouia** - located less than 50 kilometers from the capital - was planned and co-ordinated, and was neither peaceful not spontaneous from the outset.

The 'active' demonstrators were only about 300-500, the majority Libyans - amongst them a number returned from abroad - but also according to the Police, Tunisians and Egyptians. From the start of the events, they entered the town and immediately occupied the centre, taking hostage some of the citizens with them. They installed their HQ in the Mosque.

During three weeks, the police received written orders not to do anything against the insurgents, not to shoot, not to confront them. The police also had to evacuate their own buildings due to the attacks of the rioters.

The government, surprised at the escalation of the insurgency, did not want to start a blood bath, so as not cut themselves off from the tribes, nor to create the problem of *vendetta* (revenge). It is not inconceivable that the interior minister (Abdul Fatah Younis) deliberately gave orders to do nothing, so the insurgency could take hold, from the perspective of his imminent departure for Benghazi.

During those three weeks, all the public buildings were looted, ransacked and burnt; police stations, offices of the security department, court houses, town hall, prisons, etc . Everywhere there was destruction and looting, (guns, money, documents) without any trace of fighting, which confirms the statements of police officers. Some shops and pharmacies were looted and the drugs stolen.

There was also vicious attacks on the population, (women raped, some lone police officers killed) and other civilian deaths during these three weeks when the town was in the hands of the insurgents; the victims were killed in the method of the GIA Algerian terrorists, (throats cut, eyes gouged out, arms and legs chopped off, bodies burnt).

The local authorities and the police complained openly about the absence of orders from Tripoli during those three weeks, and did not understand why. But the obedience of the police to the orders of the regime was complete. There were no ill considered actions, the orders were respected.

At the end of three weeks the army received order to regain control of Ziaouia. The fighting lasted three days and was not so intense, as can be seen by inspecting the visible damage. About 100 to 150 armed men tried to resist by acting as urban guerrillas. Most of them fled towards the mountains, the other were killed. A few were taken prisoner.

Other civilian victims were of the fighting were mourned, and during this time the refinery at Ziaouia was allegedly set on fire and damaged (the delegation did not see this).

First Lessons

The Libyan 'revolution' is therefore not a peaceful uprising. The movement did not start in the capital and does not have any socio economic basis. Its epicentre is situated in the East of the country, in Cyrenaica, a region traditionally opposed to the central power. The movement quickly became an armed insurgency.

5. THE FIGHTING

The situation in Libya entered a new phase after the towns in the Tripolitana were brought back under control by the Libyan army. The country then entered a definite civil war and the fighting took on a more military aspect.

In the West, two towns continued to be held by insurgents in part or in whole: Misrata and Zentan (located south west of Tripoli).

The 'front' was located somewhere in the centre of the country, at the base of the Gulf of Sirte - a region where the petroleum deposits are located- around the towns of Ras Lanouf, Brega and Ajdabiya.

The fighting on the ground stalled, despite the support of the international community for the insurgents, via the bombing by NATO which clearly exceeded the mandate given by the UN; the deterioration in the humanitarian situation which ensued in these towns is deeply concerning, in spite of the international aid that was sent.

The Tobruk representatives claimed that there were some attempts to sabotage the port of Misrata organised from Egypt, *'by Egyptians paid by Gaddafi*. During the night of the 20th and 21st April when the delegation was there, it was claimed eight men were killed near the petrol storage tank which they were guarding. The town authorities claimed that this was an attack by the Libyan army, then rapidly shifted into an 'attack by armed gangs or even terrorists'.

Recently the insurgency re-started fighting in the West of the country, taking control of a frontier post between Wazzam and Dehiba in Tunisia, on 21st April. In response the Libyan Army crossed the border and there was fighting with insurgents along the frontier and inside Tunisian territory. The Tunisian armed forces confirmed that they exchanged fire with the Libyan Army and pushed them back into Libya. The Tunisian government called the Libyan Ambassador to make an official complaint about the violation of its frontiers.

The battle of Misrata stakes

The image portrayed of Misrata is as the last bastion of rebellion in the Tripolitana, there was continued resistance for two months against the Libyan armed forces, thanks to regular deliveries by sea of food and medicine, arms and ammunition. Little by little the town appeared in the eyes of the world 'free' like a Libyan version of Sarajevo. The rebels of Benghazi hoped that a humanitarian crisis in Misrata would persuade the coalition to deploy ground troops by reason of saving the population.

In April, Human Rights Watch published relevant casualty numbers concerning Misrata, which were contrary to claims by the international media that 'Gaddafi's army' was 'massacring civilians'. Misrata has a population of approximately 400,000. In almost two months of fighting only 257 people – fighters - died. Among the 949 injured, only 22 - less than 3 % - are women. If the Libyan army had deliberately attacked civilians women would represent about half of the casualties.

Therefore it is clear that the Western leaders - from the first rank up to President Obama - greatly exaggerated the humanitarian crisis in order to justify their military intervention in Libya.

The real interest in Misrata therefore lies elsewhere. It is both strategic and symbolic; the fact that this town is held by insurgents allows it to be said that the resistance against Gaddafi is not limited to the East of Libya and therefore that the revolt is not secessionist in nature; also, the control of this port would make an idea base, as it is only 220 km from Tripoli, in the event of a ground offensive against Gaddafi.

6. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT

The flight of foreign communities

Before the revolution, Libya, although totalitarian in nature, offered employment and income to its population and many foreigners, including Africans and Asiatics. Libya has for some time absorbed the unemployed of neighbouring states. Many immigrants worked in the petroleum and construction industries.

About 3 to 4 million foreigners left the country due to the pressure of the events.

- 1.5 to 2 million Egyptians,
- 1 million Sahel, West and Central Africans,
- 600,000 Sudanese,
- More than 200,000 Moroccans,
- More than 100,000 thousand Tunisians,
- 60,000 Palestinians,
- 10,000 Algerians,
- As well as many Turks, Philipinos, Sri Lankans and other Asiatics.

The civil war therefore caused the return home of many economic emigrants, even though their countries have high unemployment rates. This exodus risks aggravating significantly the situation in these countries; they lose a source of revenue- that income sent home by the emigrants- and see return home those who will swell the ranks of the unemployed and disaffected. This will increase the number of those being smuggled to Europe, since the Gulf countries are not interested in immigrants from some of these countries, even though they are 'brothers' and 'revolutionaries', they prefer workers from Asia.

Another consequence of the departure of these foreign workers, who contributed to economic functions in the country, is that this has put it into a state of 'hibernation'. Construction sites, hotels, restaurants, businesses and service stations are not functioning, due to lack of staff.

The humanitarian situation

The refugee camps- hosting mainly foreigners- situated on the border of Tunisia and Egypt (Sollum) have almost emptied. To date about 700 Libyan families are refugees in Marsah Matrouh, in Egypt, and 15,000 Libyans fled to Tunisia.

7. THE INSURGENTS AND THE TNC

The Transitional National Council, created 27th February 2011, is the de facto government of the Libyan opposition since the start of the uprising. On the 5th March, it declared itself 'sole representative of Libya' and elected Mahmoud Jibril Ibrahim al-Wourfalli as its President.

The TNC's representative function is to make up for its lack of executive structure: *'it is not a government but a crisis handling committee'* according to Abdul Hafiz Ghoga, spokesman for the number 2 at TNC (who has since resigned), who declared; *'we will form a government when we have liberated all of Libya'*.

The TNC is officially composed of 31 representatives from the main Libyan cities. But only the names of 13 of the 31 members have been made public. The identity of those in the West of the country (Ajdabiya, Al Kufrah, Ghat, Nalut, Misrata, Zenten and Ziaouia) has not been revealed for reasons of 'security' since they claim their relatives may be threatened by Gaddafi. The TNC is therefore dominated by Libyans from the North East, and does not have any representatives from the Centre and South of the country, nor from Tripoli, which illustrates the regional character of the insurgency. It consists of only one woman, Dr Salwa Digheli, president of the Judicial committee.

A mixed group

The justice of the cause of the TNC cannot be denied. The Libyan people, in Cyrenaica, have suffered from the dictatorship and oppression from Tripoli for 40 years. All the same the TNC is a mixed group with different interests and aims:

- The Libyan League for human rights (based in London)
- The National Front to save Libya (based in Riyadh)
- The Sanusian (or Senoussian) Monarchists (also in Riyadh)
- The 'liberals' close to Saif- al Islam (notably two of those close to him, one close to Human Rights Watch and one to Amnesty International)
- Individuals who have left the Gaddafi government but are opposed to the idea of his son following him, as they wish to take power themselves
- Followers of radical Islam, particularly militants.

The TNC therefore comprises, those opposed to the regime for some time, those who defected recently, young civilians and army members who joined the opposition. This lack of unity has affected the Council's decision making process. It also encouraged young inexperienced men to launch themselves into battle against the Libyan Army, which led to serious defeats.

The TNC is not homogenous, some of their representatives hide their identity, for reasons that are questionable, and its main leaders have disreputable pasts. In the current state of affairs it does not offer any reliable guarantee of a real democracy.

The people in the public eye at the forefront- mainly lawyers, professors - are in reality not representative. They are put forward since they speak English and can talk to the West and the Media.

Also the first signs of dissension did not take long to emerge. Abdul Hafiz Ghoga, the ex president of the Association of Libyan Lawyers -the best known representative of opposition groups - he led the rebellion in the first weeks at Benghazi - resigned at the end of April.

The influence of the Sanusi Monarchists

Gaddafi holds his power from an alliance between the western tribes, the centre and south of the country (Fezzan and Tripolitana), to the detriment of the Eastern tribes (Harabi and Obeidat), close to the old Monarchy.

The political religious tradition that dominates in Cyrenaica is that of the Sanusi, an anti-western Muslim sect, founded in 1842 at Al Baida, and practises an austere form of Islam. It is closely linked to the monarchy, after King Idriss, put in power by the British in 1951, was removed by Gaddafi in 1969.

These fundamentalist monarchists are not in the least democratic and remain opposed to any type of modern government, despite their declarations of such intent. One of their motivations is their fierce revenge, after the coup d'état in 1969 and their only aim to re-establish the monarchy and to eliminate Gaddafi.

One of the local tribal chiefs met at Tobruk - a local leader of the TNC, whose father was a minister for King Idriss - did not hide his opinion; the monarchy for him was an indispensable condition for the country's stability.

Questionable leaders

- The president of the TNC, **Mustpaha Abdujalil Al Baida**, was the minister of justice for Gaddafi only some months ago. He defected on the 21 February, at the start of the uprising. Considered a traditionalist, supported by the Islamists and the tribes, he did not have good will in Bulgaria; when he was president of the Court of Appeal in Tripoli, he confirmed in two hearings, the death penalty for the Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor imprisoned in Benghazi in 1999 to 2007. As a reward for his intransigence the 'Leader' made him Minister of Justice in 2007.

- The Foreign Affairs Minister, **Ali Abdelaziz al Essaoui**, was minister for Commerce and the Economy, then ambassador to India, before defecting to join the rebels.

- **Omar al Hariri**, given the office of 'military affairs', participated with Gaddafi in the coup d'état in 1969, but was imprisoned and then exiled after the failure of an attempted coup d'état against the Guide in 1975.

- The ex minister of the Interior, the general **Abdul Fatah Younis al Abidi**, was a powerful man and respected in the army, creator of the Special Forces. He is an old companion to Gaddafi, and defected after the start of the revolt.

If all these ex ministers of the regime have deserted Gaddafi, it is not because they have suddenly converted to democracy, but for opportunism. The President of the TNC and the head of the armed forces are ex high level members of the Tripoli regime, complicit with the 'Guide' in carrying out questionable tasks on behalf of the Grand Jamahiriya. Their joining the insurgency should not absolve them of their past responsibilities. It is completely mistaken to make them into 'liberators' who would bring Libya into an era of democracy and human rights, which were happily violated by these ex ministers during the last decade.

However certain members of the TNC do not hesitate to state that the '*presence of ex ministers of the regime at the heart of the TNC is useful so we can profit from their experience*'

Political objectives of the TNC

To build a democratic state

The TNC has promised '*just and free elections*' after the fall of Colonel Gaddafi. Outlining their '*aspirations for a unified, free and modern State*', the TNC '*guarantees to all Libyans the right to vote for legislative elections and presidential elections that are free*

and just'. A 'National Constitution, approved by referendum, guarantees the formation of political parties and the respect of freedom of expression thanks to the media and peaceful demonstrations.'

'A Constitutional civil state will respect the rights of religion and condemn intolerance, extremism and violence' adds the TNC, assuring that a new Libya 'will join the international community in the rejection and denunciation of racism, discrimination and terrorism'. Promoting human rights, the rebellion assures as well 'all protection of the interests of the rights of foreign companies', in an allusion to the important oil resources of the country.

However, many concerns remain. The text calling for a national transitory 'chart', Article 1, stipulates: *'Libya is an independent State, Sovereign and unified, non dividable. This is a democratic state, decentralised, the people are the source of its power. **Its religion is Islam and the principles of Shariah are the source of its rights.** Its official language is Arabic. Its capital is Tripoli, its citizens are free and equal under law'.*

Certain insurgents declare *'we are many to appeal for a democracy that respects our religious customs'* without seeing the contradiction.

To prevent partition

For all the Libyans, their country is no more artificial than the other countries in Africa that were created by colonialism. The nation was build within its borders and the national sentiment took root there. This is why neither the TNC, nor the Libyan people, nor the current regime want to talk about partitioning the country. There is no regional hatred between the Libyans.

Reducing the role of the tribes

The discussions of the representatives of the TNC at Derna, whom the mission met at length, were very concentrated on the notion of a 'civic society'. Behind their proposal was the little hidden desire to disempower the tribal system which governs the country. They accuse Gaddafi of having strengthened it so as to assure his power whilst giving the idea that the tribes are the real rulers, which in their view is false.

They state that the population does not want a tribal system and does not recognise the tribal chiefs. This is because the TNC is formed by those from towns, not by tribes. It is preparing a constitution on a system founded on competence and not on tribal clans. These representatives of the TNC think that in the future Libya, the tribes will have a social role but not a political role. These statements, in contrast to those we had heard the previous evening in Toubruk and which we repeated to them, were radically contradictory and caused turmoil amongst the participants we were meeting.

Reconsidering relations with the African States

It is crucial to stress the racist character of the Libyan uprising. All the black Africans present in Eastern Libya were treated as mercenaries in the service of Gaddafi. The insurgents bore strong resentment with regard to the Sahel Africans. If the new state is created, according to many members of the TNC, it will harden its stance against the Africans who aided Gaddafi.

This resentment is linked to the attitude of the African Union (AU), who on the 10th March, proposed a Road Map for Peace to Tripoli, but not to the TNC. The insurgents therefore did not want to hear about them.

When the delegates of the AU finally came to Benghazi, they presented a document in French and English but not in Arabic, without referring to the departure of

Gaddafi, which is a pre-condition of the TNC. The AU, which appears to favour Gaddafi, proposed a cease fire and constitutional reforms to move on from 42 years of dictatorship.

If the movement succeeds the TNC will have to be judged on its decisions concerning religion, women, election, terrorism, justice, democratization and the sharing of power. However, there exist today too many grey areas to give them blank cheque.

Overall the leaders of the TNC suffer from a naive and touching enthusiasm, but they are not aware of the price they will have to pay for freedom. A political price, but also an economic one, since it seems the Western powers will want to be reimbursed for their costs in the conflict.

Military strategy of the TNC

In the course of the fighting with the Libyan army - who are not the best in the world and who were without heavy arms - the insurgents rapidly reached their limits. It can be said they handle verbs better than Kalashnikovs.

The rebels did not show any strategic awareness, their commander is incompetent. They have neither tactical nor cohesive awareness. Their forces are mainly composed of badly trained armed civilians, ex members of Libyan armed forces and volunteers made up of 'pardoned' members of the Libyan Islamic Fighting group (LIFG).

The problem was not a lack of arms, since they armed themselves from the military arsenals in Cyrenaica. They lack competent personnel. Therefore they are incapable of using heavy weapons which they have (notably tanks T-55).

Despite the foreign aid which comes to them and permits them to continue fighting, they have been shown to be incapable of defeating the Libyan army. Without Western support they would have been comprehensively defeated long ago.

This is why they have delegated this task to the International Coalition, and they do not hesitate to criticise them forcefully when they consider that NATO is not doing enough or when a missile hits their side and creates collateral damage.

Above all, after having for a long time claimed that they do not want any intervention on the ground, their position has changed. On 19th April, Nouri Abdallah Abdel Ati, a member of the TNC in Misrata, appealed to western forces to intervene to protect civilians in the town, and rejected the argument from others that such action would be neo-colonialist in character.

Many of the members of the TNC sought aid from the coalition, believing that the military situation would change rapidly if NATO put troops on the ground. Henceforth for the insurgents the fall of Tripoli depends on NATO. The idea of a ground intervention took hold, since it seemed to the leaders of the TNC that there was no other solution. The TNC which is ready to accept the opposite of what it proposed some weeks ago, nevertheless hopes, that '*NATO does not suffer losses*'.

The members of our delegation were very surprised at the artificial nature of this 'revolution' by proxy, where the main players brandished foreign flags, chanted the name of Sarkozy and cried for NATO to intervene to achieve their aims, whilst affirming these were democratic.

The TNC prisoners

The mission was able to visit without difficulty the prison at Fouihat, held by the national security service of the insurgents. It was able to talk with correct translation, without hindrance. There were no security measures for our protection. We were often alone with prisoners, who were calm, resigned, at times stupefied to the point of appearing to be on tranquillisers. Representatives of the ICRC were also there during this time.

The sixty or so prisoners were held in reasonable conditions. The detained were almost all Libyan apart from a Ghanaian and an Algerian¹. Amongst them, the mission only saw a few wounded. The average age was high, about 30/40 with a few young men. Their clothing was in order, (djellabas or tracksuits) and they seemed to have plenty of cigarettes and lighters.

According to most of the prisoners, they had been seized and had not been fighting at all. Their hands and demeanour were not those of fighters/soldiers. Some acknowledged receiving a weapon and some money to fight against insurgents, but without any plan. We were not able to verify any of these statements.

The guards did not know the origins of their prisoners nor if they were really 'guilty' or not. Investigations should be carried out into this, if the law is ignored. A loyalist general, commander of engineers at Benghazi (so he said) was kept prisoner in the same conditions as the others, which does not conform to the Geneva Convention.

TNC propaganda

The insurgents at all levels denounced the excesses of the Tripoli regime, and it is not necessary to repeat that the nature of the regime is dictatorial. No one denies Gaddafi is an autocrat, nor that Libyan people have suffered. This is the main reason why the West supported him. On the other hand the systematic exaggeration which the TNC shows in its denunciation of the misdeeds of the regime, lends it less credibility. We give below some examples:

- *'Sarkozy's intervention saved more than a million humans (sic) the total population of Benghazi'*.
- *In Tripoli you can't even go out in the street. There is no life, the population is afraid and only goes out surreptitiously to get food.*
- *Gaddafi has hired agents who in turn hired agents to organise provocations*
- *At Misrata and Ajdabiya, Gaddafi gave Viagra and condoms to his troops. There are many rapes and missing women.*
- *Gaddafi wants NATO to intervene on the ground, he does not want peace nor to put out the fires. He wants foreign troops; he wants more victims.*
- *A vehicle of the Algerian army was seen at Brega.*
- *The Algerian army re-supplies Gaddafi with helicopters'*.

At the end of April, the leader of the insurgents, on a visit to Kuwait, again accused Algeria of supporting the Gaddafi regime and of supplying him with material to assist the entry into Libya of mercenaries. This statement is totally denied by Dr Salah-ed Din el Bechiri, a member of the foreign affairs committee at the heart of the TNC and ex ambassador to Malaysia. He stated to our delegation that there had not been an

¹ Called Boualem Benhamouda, he said he was a businessman and had been in Benghazi for three years where he is a market trader

official statement from the TNC concerning 'Algerian mercenaries'. This is obviously false but these assertions were echoed by the international press and the TNC seized the Arab League about this "affair".

In parallel certain Libyans in Egypt were accused of destabilising Eastern Libya. The head of the TNC demanded that the government of Cairo intervene.

Otherwise, the members of the TNC produced a speech that was unequivocally designed to seduce and reassure Western representatives (elections, multi party, rights of women, end of tribalism, and even the recognition of Israel). They all appeared to have received training and instructions and their statements were obviously rehearsed. This parroting is astonishing on the part of men and one woman who aspire to more transparency and democracy, though these observations allowed the delegation to see that there were numerous gaps between the commitments given to the West and the reality on the ground.

At the end - the representatives of the TNC - like those in the government in Tripoli- gave us a number of documents and videos, these claiming to be attacks on demonstrations by the forces of law and order. Since no document was properly referenced as to its source, it is impossible to examine them objectively.

Foreign support to the TNC

No one complained of money problems, since the insurgents benefit from significant financial and humanitarian aid. However there seems to be a shortage of medicines. But the most important for the TNC is political recognition. The visit of Senator Mc Cain, on the 22nd April, and his intervention in the international media counted for much with them.

Hezbollah (see declaration of Nasrallah, their leader) also adopted a stance in favor of the insurgency and proposed sending instructor and arms. Hamas will allegedly do the same.

The TNC says it is surprised at the attitude of Russia and China, hostile to the insurgents and the intervention of NATO.

8. NATO'S ACTIONS

The results of air strikes

Although some countries engaged in the operation do not clearly state what their objectives are, military action aims logically for a cease fire. For this to happen, three methods were determined: a maritime arms embargo; a no fly zone; the protection of civilians. It is this last objective that has been the most problematic, since it is interpreted by NATO as destroying the heavy weapons of the Libyan Army.

At the start of the first weeks of bombing, the French, American and UK airforces systematically attacked the military assets of the Libyan army, destroying its anti aircraft radar and many armed vehicles and heavy artillery. The absence of any operators on the ground led to an excess at times: four Tomahawk missiles were launched at the naval base hangers in Tripoli- which has clearly nothing to do with a no

fly zone- to destroy 4 naval training anti missile launcher vehicles. Three million dollars were spent to reduce to ashes inert materials.

According to General Bouchard, the Canadian officer commanding NATO's operation, almost 30% of the Libyan army was destroyed thanks to the bombs of the coalition. The memory of largely erroneous assessments from NATO's aerial campaigns against the Serb forces in the Kosovo war, must lead us to reserve judgement on this estimate.

Some military experts have accused the Coalition of using weapons containing depleted uranium. NATO denied using these weapons, but the experts, who analysed the photos of aerial attacks against the Libyan Army, concluded that such weapons were probably used. Even if no proof exists, the doubt persists. The allegation must be disproved as otherwise it is a crime for international justice to prosecute.

Collateral Damages

The bombings were precise and collateral damage minor, but it did exist¹. Some NATO attacks had dramatic consequences for civilians.

At Mizda however, whereas military installations were targeted, the NATO air strike hit the hospital, the doctors' lodgings and offices, and about forty homes located nearby, causing many casualties amongst civilians and the medical personnel, some of whom were North Korean doctors.

In addition there was the trauma and psychological shock which the inhabitants suffered, whole families left their homes to find refuge in tents. The delegation which met them could see their very difficult living conditions

The delegation also noted the disbelief on the part of inhabitants in the West and South of the country as to the reasons and motivation for this bombing. They feel very upset at being considered criminals just because they are Libyan citizens. They do not understand why only the interests of the people in the East are taken into consideration by the international coalition.

According to other witness statements taken at Misrata and Ziaouia, the aerial bombing by NATO caused collateral damage in which foreigners were victims. A hundred Algerian families lost everything and others were obliged to leave their location and abandon their belongings: some families were still looking for their missing nearest and dearest.

Limits of NATO's air strikes

After several weeks of bombing, the strikes by NATO showed their limitations. The regime forces adapted so as to reduce the effect of the aerial strikes :

- by using light vehicles, pickups, whose appearance is less easy to identify by surveillance aircraft,
- by disguising their heavy weapons, which were vulnerable, and moving at night towards combat zones,
- by entrenching at times in urban areas, heightening the risk of collateral damage in the event of NATO Air strikes, as seen in Misrata during combat.

¹ The Libyans said a hospital in Tripoli was hit by a coalition strike. We are not able to confirm this allegation.

Besides, trained and motivated infantry units, using light weapons support - mortars, rocket launchers, snipers - are quite capable of holding urban zones and to undo insurgent gains without air power being able to intervene effectively.

In the current state of affairs the decision does not seem able to be accomplished by action based on air strikes and military advice.

In effect, several factors limit the ability to dislodge the armed forces of Gaddafi

- The withdrawal of some of the US assets at the end of March.
- The fact that only six countries, with limited means, are participating.
- The difficulties of NATO in organising an efficient, controlled operation.
- The weakness of insurgency forces on the ground.
- The tactical adaptation of the Libyan army to counter the effect of the air strikes.
- The decision of the US air force to deploy armed predator drones will not change this situation.

Observations of the Delegation

The delegation spent a week in Tripoli and in the West of Libya (31st March to 6th April) without seeing an airplane, without witnessing a bombing and without hearing anti-aircraft fire.

With the exception of the Bab Al Aziza complex- the residence of Colonel Gaddafi- and the little naval base, the Libyan capital did not then seem affected by NATO.

There was no military forces deployed in the city, and the atmosphere was not one of a country at war. The Tripoli residents went around normally and even promenaded by the sea in the evening. The policemen in the town were not armed.

At the exit from Tripoli, checkpoints were installed on the roads. But they consisted of a handful of men, police, or militia, lightly armed (mostly ZSU 23/2 on pick up).

Reactions of the Libyan people to the bombing

With the further bombings by NATO carried out during the night of April 30th/May 1st, which killed Gaddafi's son and three of his grandchildren, the population of Tripoli became incensed at NATO.

That is why a number of diplomatic missions of members of NATO were attacked in the capital. The inhabitants of Tripoli gathered near the Italian and UK embassies and set them on fire. Other attacks, which did not cause major damage, were against the French and US Embassies. A building of the UN was also targeted.

A vague and imprecise UN resolution

The military operation in Libya, named 'Odyssey Dawn' was framed within the scope of a resolution, from the United Nations, obtained in extremis, thanks to the green light from the USA, the neutrality of Russia and China and an intervention, direct from the French president, to many non permanent members. By reason of the limited support from regional organisations (the Arab league notably) largely extracted by

France and the UK, by some arm twisting, this whole operation rests on a fragile and fluctuating political base.

If the resolution 1973 limits the use of aerial force for the protection of civilians, it unfortunately leaves free rein to many interpretations, in stating 'all measures necessary' to achieve this objective. The resolution does not even completely exclude a ground intervention, since it translates as 'excluding a foreign occupation force'.

It permits therefore a large latitude in the use of force after the simple no fly zone is in place up to the complete destruction of the Libyan Army 'so as to protect civilians'.

One can only regret the excessive interpretation of this resolution made by France the UK and the US. Even though few may weep over Gaddafi and his authoritarian regime, the elimination of the Libyan leader is not authorised, nor legitimate in the context of this operation. This sort of action tends to reinforce those in Arab countries who accuse the West of neo-colonialism. It must be underlined that the resolution 1973 of the UN does not authorise multiple political assassination attempts.

9. ACTIONS OF WESTERN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

The close links made since the mid 1990's between the CIA and MI6, on the one hand and on the other the Libyan intelligence, appears to have allowed the US and UK agents to recruit several sources even those services direct by Moussa Koussa, who many suspect of being a double agent for MI6.

So when the Libyan army forces were on the outskirts of Benghazi and when it seemed that the fate of the rebellion was sealed, it was decided in Washington- with the secret agreement of London and Paris- to attack Libya to overthrow the regime in Tripoli.

In conjunction with the aerial attacks decided by the UN and conducted by the coalition under the command of NATO, the Western intelligence services reinforced their presence in Libya, with the aim of supporting the rebels in their fight against the regime in Tripoli. The use of special forces and their secret units of operation was to circumvent the resolution of the UNSC which excludes 'an occupying force'. It is to be noted that this presence on the ground was already there before the air operation began and with regards to international law, is clearly a breach of it.

Undercover support operations

From the start of the aerial operation, teams of CIA were deployed in Libya, on the orders of the President of the **USA**, to make contact with the insurgents and to act as spotters and guides for air attacks. The President allegedly signed a secret memorandum permitting these secret operations so as to 'contribute to the war effort' in Libya. This permitted the return of Colonel Hafter¹.

¹ Khalif Belqasim Hafter, colonel of the Libyan army taken prisoner in Tchad, in 1987, after the retaking of the Oadi Doum by the army of Tchad. During the course of his detention he was recruited by the American services, and he has been an agent since that date. At the end of the 80's Hafter rejoined the Front for the saving of the Libyan people founded in 1981 and directed by Mohammed Al-Muqariyif. Hafter takes control of its military branch and creates an anti Gaddafi underground on the Egyptian frontier, with the

Then on the request of Washington, the **UK** sent some military advisors to the insurgents, in order to support the action of the CIA on the ground. Several dozen members of the British Special Forces and officers of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) were operating in Libya to gather intelligence on the position of loyalist forces. However these missions did not always go smoothly.

At the beginning of March, a small group composed of two MI6 agents and six men of the Special Air Service (SAS) tried to enter discreetly to make contact with the heads of the rebellion in Benghazi. The operation was cut short as when their helicopters landed the eight men were surrounded by men who were guarding a farm. Captured then taken to the insurgents, they were interrogated for several days before the British authorities confirmed their mission and organised their extraction by helicopter.

The '*Canard enchaîné*' (French weekly satirical journal, influential in political circles) revealed that **France** had, for its part, allegedly supplied, under cover of humanitarian goods, 105mm canons and anti aircraft batteries to the rebels at Benghazi, keeping the promise of Nicholas Sarkozy, to the President of the TNC; 'we will help you'. This operation handled by the service of the DGSE (French Intelligence Service) would have also allowed some liaison officers to be sent to aid the insurgents and co-ordinate their operations as well as instructors to advise on battle orders, logistics and organisation. Francois Baroin, spokesperson for the French government declared that the number of agents sent to Libya was limited. This initiative, according to him, was to protect civilians since France had no intention of deploying troops on the ground.

So as not be left out, Italy also sent some military advisers after the rebellion started.

The Western Countries are not alone in supporting the rebels, **Egypt** is also implicated. Information indicates that members of the special forces - Unit 777 - had crossed the frontier to supply arms to the rebels and tactical support.

The assassination attempts on Gaddafi

One of the fastest means to resolve the Libyan crisis is thought to be the disappearance of the Libyan Leader. So the coalition services, in co-ordination with the air forces tried to eliminate him.

In reality the members of the coalition fear its disintegration. On the one hand the Italian Prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, has a difficult situation with fragile political alliances and personal court cases which could lead to his departure in short term. His successors do not seem in favour with regards to the NATO operation and could remove Italy from the coalition. Also on 19th May the Executive order signed by Obama for the Libyan operations and valid for 60 days, expires.

This timetable seems to explain the bombing of the home of the leader in Tripoli, during the night of the 30th April, in flagrant violation of the UN resolution 1973. During this event the air forces of NATO one of the children of Gaddafi, Saif al Arab 29, who held no official position in the government of regime was killed along with three of his young

support of Paris and Washington. After the failure of his actions he finds refuge in the USA. It spent the most part of 20 years in Virginia, in a house situated a dozen kilometres from the CIA headquarters. His return to Libya was in March and the TNC put him in charge of important military responsibilities.

children. Moussa Ibrahim, spokesperson for the Government, denounced this attempted assassination of the Libyan leader, who was in the house but escaped injury.

It should also be noted that the home of Colonel Gaddafi Bab al Azizia in central Tripoli had already been targeted during the first wave of bombings.

10. INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES

The military intervention in Libya, as well all the more or less transparent attempts by the West to influence the 'Arab revolutions' demonstrate the crucial nature of the problem of energy resources belonging to North Africa and the Middle East that affect their international relations.

The US Strategy

The United States have a strong interest in controlling Libya, or at least having it as their satellite. Certainly this country only supplies 2% of worldwide oil production, but it holds the largest reserves in Africa. Its hydrocarbons are of better quality and the extraction is easy and also profitable.

In addition Washington would like its revenge on Gaddafi who refused in 2008 to join the US Africa Command (Africom) a regional command centre installed by the Pentagon to fight terrorism and the penetration by China into Africa. The Libyan Guide said he was opposed to this 'imperialist venture which was trying to buy the continent'.

However the real aim of the operation in Libya was not only oil nor revenge. It is primarily against the Chinese penetration on the African continent where Beijing seeks to develop its access to energy sources.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently published a report which explains that the era of the USA is near its end and the American economy will be surpassed by China during the next five years. Washington is trying to stop this development of the Chinese economy, by limiting its access to natural energy resources which are indispensable to its growth. The manoeuvres we are involved in, without always seeing the connections, are relevant to this strategy.

Washington wants to overthrow Gaddafi since they want to expel China from Libya. Beijing has made enormous investments into energy in Libya and depends on this country for part of its energy needs. China had 30,000 workers in Libya; it had to evacuate 29,000.

The interests of some other players

The engagement- or the reservations- of the European states is equally tied to their economic interests. Italy which has for a long time had good relations with Libya, due to its colonial past, and Germany, are the two main beneficiaries of Libyan oil, and have made significant investments in this country, which is also a market for their exports. However France and the UK have not been able to conclude good contracts with

Gaddafi. So they did not hesitate to get involved and take sides with the insurgents so as to overthrow the regime in Tripoli.

Apart from the economic approach, Germany warned its partners that this military venture was high risk. The Berlin authorities emphasised that this could end in a partition of Libya which would lead to a terrorist state and/or a failed state on Europe's doorstep. However they were not heeded.

Europe is therefore divided into 'interventionists' UK and France and 'wait and see' Italy and Germany. Europe is playing the American game rather than its own and takes liberties with the UN resolution 1973.

This Europe looks for and finds alliances with regimes where the dictatorships are more dictatorial than that of Gaddafi: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates.

The Saudi and Doha regimes played a decisive factor in the early hours of the revolution via their intermediaries, the TV stations *Al Arabia* and *Al Jazeera*, who 'made opinion' on the bases of factual errors, if not deliberate lies. This curious sponsorship of a revolution that wants to be democratic and respect human rights, by petromonarchies, does not resemble in any way genuine liberal regimes in the West.

Certain sources claim that Qatar and Saudi Arabia – with the support of the UAE - would be in favour of a 'Sanusi' Petroleum Monarchy in Eastern Libya.

The last, but not least, country interested in the conflict is Egypt. It has never accepted the joining of Cyrenaica and its oil reserves to Tripoli, after the independence of Libya, proclaimed in 1951. On the occasion of an attempt to overthrow Gaddafi in 1991, Washington apparently promised Cairo that Cyrenaica would be given to them. The new masters of Egypt are playing a dangerous game and their internal outcomes, as of those in Libya, will have a determining factor on the future of the region.

The revue of interested parties would be incomplete without mentioning Israel, concerned in the first place at the destabilisation of regional regimes that it has spent many decades managing to keep in balance, and by the rise of Islamism; Netanyahu's cabinet, which certain members of the TNC are ready to recognise, meanwhile remains cautious.

11. FRANCE'S POSITION

Reasons for the French involvement

On the 10th March 2011, France was the first country to recognise the TNC as the only 'legitimate representative of the Libyan people'. This decision by Sarkozy caused astonishment in his European partners. Three reasons seem to be at the root of this:

- *The frustration of French diplomats at having been surprised by the Arab revolution.* The Quai de Orsay harboured, we are told, a feeling of having been overtaken by events in the winter of 2011 in Tunisia and Egypt. It wanted therefore to retake the diplomatic initiative. The Libyan crisis offered an opportunity. France therefore exploited the strong anti Gaddafi sentiment that existed in our diplomats.

- *The games of internal politics.* To start a military operation abroad in the year of a presidential election is not an innocent act. From the perspective of 2012 a victory

against a long vilified Arab dictator could only be helpful and reinforce the status of military commander for the president, whose popularity is historically weak.

- *The situation at the time of the presidential decision* is also to be taken into account. The French President made this risky decision at a time when his main advisor, Claude Gueant, expert on Libya, left the Elysee for the ministry of the Interior, and when Bernard Bajolet, the national co-ordinator of intelligence, a recognised expert on the Arab world, left his position to become ambassador in Kabul. Consequently the President found himself without his faithful watchdogs, succumbed to the influence of Bernard Henry-Levy and the Emir of Qatar, who pushed him to receive, recognise and support the TNC.

The unilateral decision by Nicholas Sarkozy stunned his German and Italian allies - it is one of the reasons Berlin abstained on the vote at the UN - and his interior minister Alain Juppe was placed in a position like that of Colin Powell in 2003, when at the start of the invasion of Iraq, he had to defend a position he had not chosen and with which he did not appear to want to be associated with.

Dangerous Illusions

The illusions of President Sarkozy were strengthened by the outrageous declarations of the incipient Libyan revolutionaries and the genuine enthusiasm of the population of Benghazi. The leaders of the TNC claimed that the French president had saved 'a million lives' and this friendship between France and the TNC would allow the development and survival of the revolution.

Indubitably France and its president benefitted from a warm 'mutual admiration' in Cyrenaica. This delegation, made up of mainly French people, received a warm welcome. French flags are hung everywhere and sold in kiosks. In Derna those we met said there had been an increase in the enrolment in French courses at the university, mainly by women.

It is acknowledged that the name of a French president has never been so promoted in a foreign country. If he is lauded in the East then in the West he is deplored, and always present in the mass media is the impression as if France was solely responsible for the situation, in the eyes of both sides in Libya. The Libyans loyal to the regime do however distinguish between the French people and their President.

This media hype on the French participation is wrong and dangerous. Certainly some secret contracts have already been concluded with the insurgents, but nothing today can indicate whether the gamble President Sarkozy took to overthrow the regime will succeed. In the case of Gaddafi retaining power French companies will find themselves in an extremely bad position. In the case of partition of the country or in negotiation between the parties, France will not be able to play any role of arbitration since the resentment against its President is so strong in Tripoli.

We are convinced that this ill considered action of Paris is playing the game of Washington, which leaves Sarkozy as the 'driver' of the coalition, with the risk, in case of failure, of taking all the responsibility of this venture. The more discreet attitude of President Obama allows the US to draw their irons out of the fire.

Cost of the conflict

With regards to the possible but uncertain benefits, the cost of the conflict is not negligible.

Some air operations use the *Rafale* aircrafts, which could have a positive impact on their export. However France is spending each day in Libya five times what it spends in Afghanistan. This is essentially due to the cost of flight hours and the high price of missiles.

The flight time per fuel hours of the *Rafale* is in the order of 13,000 euros and that of the *Mirage 2000* is 11,000 euros. The aircraft depart from French bases and have six hours flight time to Libya and back. The cost of sorties is somewhat reduced since the arrival of aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle.

The minister for Defense, Gerard Longuet, indicated at the end of April to the deputies that 11 'SCALP' cruise missiles had been fired at Libya. According to a parliamentary document, the price of this missile is as high as 850,000 euros each. Eleven missiles represent therefore 9.35 million euros. Other munitions, less expensive have been fired, medium range missiles and guided laser bombs but according to our information from the specialist press, the cost of the first two weeks of intervention was greater than 30 million euros. The final cost will depend on the length of the operation. This engagement will weigh heavily on the defense budget, already greatly restricted.

As is usual the overrun of the original budget will oblige the use of investment credits which will affect the Defense budget for years in the future.

12. THE TERRORIST THREAT

There is no irrefutable proof of the presence of terrorists but by their nature this type of presence is not easily detected. What is on display in the environment of Eastern Libya, is clearly marked by fundamentalism; the many completely veiled women, the men wearing beards, giving the impression of Iran and the ayatollahs.

It is worth noting that the Muslim Brotherhood in Libya are traditionally implanted into the East of the country. Above all, after more than two decades the Cyrenaica, and more particularly the Djebel Akhdar, is the zone of refuge for the LIFG.

The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group

The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) was founded in Afghanistan, at the start of the 1990's by Libyan mujaheddin, veterans of the soviet-afghan war, and remained there after the end of the conflict. Their existence was never officially announced until 1995. The LIFG is inscribed on the black list of terrorist organisations by the UN Security Council.

From 1995, under the leadership of Abou Abdallah Saddik, its historic leader, the LIFG, launched itself into the jihad against the regime of Tripoli. A large number of its militants returned to Libya to overthrow Gaddafi and to substitute a radical Islamic state. Terrorist acts were carried out in the interior of the country. The security services were able to uncover a plot to kill the Guide in 1996. They then launched a fight without

mercy against the LIFG, and, something unthinkable until then, a close cooperation was established between the Western intelligence services to fight together against Al Qaida. This made Gaddafi an enemy to be attacked by the organisation created by Bin Laden; the number two of Al Qaeda, Ayman Al Zawahiri, listed the Libyan leader as his target last year.

The police operations carried out in Libya made most of the activists of the LIFG depart the country to pursue their activities in foreign countries. Many militants were scattered and entered the heart of the international cells of Al Qaeda.

- The most famous is Anas Al-Liby who participated in the attack of August 1998 against the American Embassies of Dar es Salam and Tanzania and Nairobi in Kenya. He was arrested in May 2002 in London.

- Another important terrorist is Ibrahim Abou Faraj Farj Al- Libi who was arrested in Pakistan the 2nd May 2005. Product of the LIFG he succeeded in climbing the ranks of the hierarchy of Al Qaeda close to the military centre. He was part of the first circle of Osama bin Laden whom he had met in Sudan in the mid 90's. He also became responsible for the exterior operations of Bin Laden, succeeding to Khaled Sheik Mohamed after his capture in March 2003.

In November 2007 the LIFG declared itself affiliated officially to Al Qaeda, which brought the Libyan jihadists into the operations against the Americans in Iraq.

Cyrenaica, Land of Jihadists

A report presented in 2007 to the West Point military academy revealed that Cyrenaica, the epicentre of the revolution against Gaddafi, was one of the main areas of recruitment for Islamic fighters in Iraq. Documents seized in 2007 by American forces in Iraq contained a list of six hundred fighters who were members of Al Qaeda, of whom 112 were Libyans, and the majority came from Cyrenaica.

It is more specifically the town of Derna that hundreds of Libyan fighters left from to fight in the Jihad operations in Afghanistan, Iraq. Some later returned to Libya.

The most astonishing revelation of the West Point study was that the region between Benghazi and Tobruk, passing via Derna, has one of the greatest concentrations of terrorists in the world, with a fighter going to Iraq for every 1,000 to 1,500 inhabitants.

If Saudi Arabia occupies the first rank in the number of jihadists (41%) who left to fight the Americans, Libya occupies 2nd place, (19 % or 112 Jihadists). This signifies that a fifth of foreign fighters in Iraq were Libyan and that it contributed the most of any nation apart from Saudi Arabia. Derna, a town of 90,000 inhabitants, sent 52 fighters to Iraq.

Another characteristic of the Libyan contribution is the high proportion of kamikaze/ suicide bombers in its ranks. Libyan jihadists are more likely to commit suicide bombings (85%) than other nationalities (56%). These figures are alarming.

In 2009 the heads of the LIFG renounced the armed fight against the Gaddafi regime in an agreement made with the Libyan Security representatives. This is the reason that Saif- al Islam, the son of the guide, released 800 of them from Libyan prisons. Today they have joined the ranks of the insurgents.

So the military coalition, under the auspices of NATO, is supporting a rebellion comprising Islamic Terrorists; no one can deny that the Libyan rebels that are today supported by Washington were until recently jihadists killing American GI's in Iraq.

LIFG's involvement in the fighting

The Leader of the Libyan rebels, Hakim al- Hasidi, one of the heads of LIFG trained in the camps of Afghanistan- declared that the Jihadists who fought against the allied troops in Iraq are today fighting against the Gaddafi regime. They count a thousand men under their command, Al- Hasidi is today a member of the TNC in Derna, responsible for security in the East of the Cyrenaica. He operates under the orders of General Abdul Fatah Younis, ex minister of the Interior under Gaddafi.

These facts are confirmed by the American Admiral Stavridis, Supreme Commander of Allies Forces of NATO in Europe; *'dozens of ex fighters from the LIFG are participating with the rebels to overthrow Gaddafi.'*

In an echo of this statement the Wall Street Journal states that the leaders of the LIFG *'recently distanced themselves from Al Qaeda and declare that their fight is only against the Libyan regime.'*

The members of the TNC, such as Achour Bourachid, originally from Derna, do not bother too much about the presence of fundamentalists at the heart of the revolution: *'we are all muslims, we are in the national liberation phase, it is not the time to look at our differences, we will start to worry when they start causing trouble...'*

Moreover Abdul Haim Al – Hasidi insisted that the fighters *'were all good Muslims and not terrorists and they are fighting against the invader'*, more disturbingly he adds *'contrary to what Gaddafi says, I was not part of Al Qaeda, but if the situation of instability goes on, I won't hesitate to use them.'*

The western intelligence agencies are very concerned about the presence of Al Qaeda fighters at the centre of the Libyan insurgents. Admiral Stavridis echoed this in front of the US Senate. He acknowledged tactfully that the US intelligence had detected *'certain signs of terrorist activity amongst the groups of rebels'*. That is alarming but is not surprising since the LIFG is the main pillar of the armed insurgency.

- Abdul Hakimm Al – Hasidi was to leave Benghazi mid April to go to Misrata by boat, filled with weapons, and *'twenty five well trained men'*.

- Abdelmomem Al Madhouni- alias Mustapha Al Zawi, Orwam or also Ibn Al Ward - member of Al Qaeda since 1990's, was apparently killed in the fighting in Brega; he was on the Interpol wanted list.

Al Qaeda's statements

Ismail Sallabi, another member of the LIFG, was training 200 fundamentalists in the barracks of Benghazi the 7th April, helped by about twenty experts from Qatar.

Saleh Abi Mohammed, in charge of media, of the Magreb branch of Al Qaeda recently gave an interview to the Saudi paper Al Hayyat published in London.

He confirmed that his organisation has established 'emirates' in Benghazi, Al Bayda, Al Marj, Shihat and Derna. *'We are mostly present in Derna, where sheik Abdul Hakim our emir has formed – near our brothers- an Islamic council to govern the town under Sharia law.'* One must not forget the potential for Al Qaeda to spread out across the region that a base in Eastern Libya offers them.

Saleh Abi Mohammed- also confirmed that the terrorist organisation recently acquired arms, *'to protect our fighters and defend the banner of Islam'*

The responses of the TNC

Faced with these facts the response from members of TNC was embarrassment. On the subject of weapons, they recognised that after the fall in Benghazi of the Libyan army, the arsenals were looted. But they said Eastern Libya had few barracks and they were ill equipped. Therefore the demonstrators would only have a few arms. Nevertheless they did not deny that the increase in arms is a reality. That is why they were trying to take stock of the numbers and asked citizens to put their weapons back when the crisis is over.

Concerning the presence of terrorists the denials were more categorical. The majority questioned said there were no foreign (Al Qaeda) terrorists in the East of Libya nor mercenaries since they would be recognisable and identified easily by the population. One of our interviewees in Tobruk remembered that some of the 'fighters' had slit the throats of Libyan Army soldiers in Ajdabiya. But he said they were arrested and punished. He said they were only a '*few dozen*' at most.

A new regional terrorist base ?

The intelligence services are very concerned over the whereabouts of the weapons looted by the insurgents from the Libyan arsenals. In particular portable shoulder to air missiles, like SAM-7. Members of Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) have apparently obtained many of these from Libyan traffickers. If this information is confirmed then French Intelligence are afraid of finding them tomorrow '*in the Sahara, Afghanistan or in La Courneuve, Paris' suburb*'. According to Claude Gueant, the French minister for the Interior, some of these weapons have already been transported to the Sahel.

The Malian authorities have recently declared seeing signs of infiltration of weapons, (AK47, RPG7, ZSU 23, SAM 7) and materials (pickups and troop transporters) in the north of the country.

That is why, at the end of April, the Foreign Minister for Mali, Mr Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga, judged the situation 'grave and worrying' in the region. There was a new AQIM base on Malian territory, near the Mauritanian frontier, 370 kilometers from Nara, in the north of Bamako. Many vehicles transporting elements supposed to be AQIM were observed in the forest of Wagadou. This new base will permit the terrorist organisation to launch new operation on Mauritanian territory and in Mali.

The repercussions of the Libyan Crisis also make themselves felt in Algeria, where according to the security services, the deterioration in the security situation in Kabylie is directly linked to conflict which is disrupting Algeria, and which AQIM hope to profit from with their new arms and munitions.

The conflict in Libya is also a factor creating insecurity in the whole region Sub-Sahara, but also the Maghreb. Thanks to the arrival of looted Libyan arms AQIM is currently stocking up its arsenal and increasing the danger which it represents to the region. The heads of state of Algeria, Mali, Niger and Mauritania have recently discussed this at a meeting held at Bamako. Worst still AQIM could be tempted to extend its actions westwards.

The consequences of the Libyan crisis could make the appearance of 'sanctuaries' a real possibility, like a 'mini Waziristan' in a region which the local security forces find

difficult to control. This precarious situation is not dissimilar to the one in Afghanistan in the 1990's.

13. THE FUTURE OF THE 'REVOLUTION'

It is not necessary to repeat the critical aspects of the authoritarian regime imposed since 1969 by M Gaddafi on his citizens. There are plenty of examples that the international media broadcast widely. However it is also that negative context which tends to diminish any positive aspects of the regime and thus the truth is not best served.

Nothing is more legitimate than the aspiration for more freedom and democracy. The authors of this report are convinced of the sincerity of Libyan democrats opposed to the regime and who wish to put an end to the authority of Gaddafi.

Nonetheless a study of the facts leads us to conclude that the 'revolution' is neither spontaneous nor democratic. We are witnessing an organised, armed uprising from the East of the country driven by revenge and revolt. This uprising has been mainly encouraged and supported by overseas countries. One only has to see the number of French, American, Qatari flags in the street of towns in Cyrenaica to see the lack of 'national' character of this 'revolution'. More over it is a revolution where the leaders hide themselves. The situation therefore is in no way comparable to the events in Egypt and Tunisia.

If one wished for the end of the current regime, then it is important, in all fairness to voice some reserves on the topic of the TNC. The Transitional Council is a coalition of disparate elements with divergent goals, whose only common aim is their opposition to the current regime. The real democrats are only a minority, almost hostage to those who wish the return of the monarchy or the imposition of radical Islam and new converts from the regime. These three factions have understood they need to put forwards statements to reassure, not scare off the Western powers. History has shown us that the defenders of liberty rarely emerge victorious with a 'forward strategy' in which other players co-exist, armed and determined.

The TNC therefore does not offer any guarantee, apart from the good will of the few democrats, since the ex members of the regime, the monarchists and the Islamists are in the majority and know how to steer the council in the direction of their aims.

Libya is the only country of the 'Arab spring' in which a civil war has taken hold - with a real risk of partition- and where the Islamic fundamentalist risk has increased. It is probable that if the hard core of the TNC takes power in Cyrenaica we will be helping in the radical Islamicisation of the country. The Jihadists were unable to do this in Algeria, but they could do this in Libya. The consequences will be therefore catastrophic for the Western world.

It seems therefore that the Western powers have demonstrated a shameful adventurism by involving themselves in this crisis, unless it results from a completely cynical Machiavellianism. That which was supposed to be an easy victory has turned into a semi- failure that only the media conceal, because of the inconsistency of the rebels. The stalemate of the actions of the insurgents leaves the western nations only two possibilities; an inglorious retreat or an intensified involvement in the conflict, that involves sending in ground forces.

It is possible to outline here three hypotheses as to the possible end of the conflict.

- Firstly, Gaddafi could regain control of the whole country. This is militarily possible but it is unlikely because of the international action against him.
- Secondly, it is unlikely that the regime is threatened in the short term, as one might have thought still three months ago. It will be very difficult for insurgent forces to get into Tripolitana which is the Gaddafi's stronghold. And there is absolutely no guarantee that the rebels would be welcomed as liberators in western Libya.
- Finally the most likely scenario to be emerging is the division of the country, de facto or de jure - more or less long lasting - the East controlled by the rebels, and the South and West remaining under the power of the Libyan authorities, this solution is more and more likely even though rejected by both sides. The oil fields, which Gaddafi regained control of, are situated on the line of division and these two areas have been the site of most fighting. Whoever controls these resources will reduce the options of the other side's future.

It cannot be excluded if such a partition happened, that the US will wish to control the Gulf of Sirte, which is of great importance for them since it will complete their aim to control the Mediterranean.

In addition, only the regime in Tripoli - somewhat weakened - has responded favourably to proposal of mediation and it alone has offered a cease fire. But the insurgents, the US and the UN Coalition have rejected any compromise solution.

The Western intervention is in the process of creating more problems than it solves. That Gaddafi is pushed to go is one thing. That one puts Libya through bloodshed and flames and makes a bed for fundamentalist Islam is another. The current actions greatly risk destabilising the whole of North Africa, Sahel and the Near East, and will assist the emergence of a new base for radical Islam, in other words terrorism.

The coalition may perhaps succeed in eliminating the Libyan Guide or to force his departure. But the West must take care that he is not replaced by a more radical anti western regime and a non democratic one. It will then have become its accomplice. It is legitimate to ask if a certain direction has not already been chosen, since one observes the astonishing 'unnatural alliances' which were created round the Libyan affair by Washington, for the purpose of defending its strategic interests. One hopes that the West has not forgotten Afghanistan in the 1990's and more so the old story of Charybdis and Scylla.

Last but not least, it is necessary to ask the question regarding the legitimacy of an action which risks 'deposing' a government, in the name of 'sainted democracy', and in doing so forgets that those principles of democracy belong to the people and not to those from other countries.

The international community is not a super state which can overthrow governments as it pleases and moreover do so in the name of the principles it purports to uphold but, by its own actions, clearly does not respect. Furthermore in doing so, it is clearly attributing guilt to the parties according to their oil resources and not their crimes, real or imaged.

Paris 30th May 2011