

Four years after the rebels and NATO air campaign overthrew Kaddafi, the cohesive political entity known as Libya does not exist as such anymore. The Central government is only a name and tribal and different religious factions are struggling for the power and above all to own and manage the country's oil wealth.

As a country it has broken up and therefore its original components, before the forced Italian colonial unification, has newly emerged. There are two power centres: one in the Eastern region or Cyrenaica and another one in the Western part or Tripolitania. These two halves are in the Northern part of the country while the South or Fezzan is a huge barren and lawless land where all kind of traffics are flourishing.

The civil war that is raging is the outcome of the warring powers: "Dignity" and "Dawn". It has destroyed the social and economic structure and made the oil production to be reduced dramatically. This has paralyzing consequences as oil revenues had been the only source of income that has allowed the functioning of the state institutions until 2013.

As the war goes on the consequences for Libya are appalling and can worsen because of the following reasons:

1.-The economic devastation is leading to a very serious humanitarian crisis since the functioning of the country is entirely based on its oil wealth that in normal times stands for 90% of the GNP.

Now this percentage has dropped because the fighting has reduced the crude output and damaged the export facilities. In 2010 the output was 1, 6 million barrels per day and now is only about 300.000 barrels per day since the attacks to the Ras Lanuf and al-Sidr oil ports created high insecurity among the foreign companies that are extracting hydrocarbons. As an aftermath the National Oil Corporation has lost 80% of its capacity and if the war continues there is a possible outright suspension of oil extraction.

The slump of 60% in the crude world prices is also a threat to the revenues that constitute Libyan GNP. For 2015 those revenues are only 10% of what they were in 2012 and because the national budgets are based on oil wealth its reduction has a direct impact on the population income as 85% are state employees. That figure means that 42% of the annual budget is spent in salaries for civil servants. From the budget another 30 billion have to be spent to import food. Libya only produces 10% of the food it consumes and therefore has to import 90 % of foodstuffs. All these figures make the budget deficit rise to 15 billion and growing. As foreign currency reserves are needed to cover the deficit and cannot be replenished due to the shortfalls in oil revenues it is feared that in the near future they might entirely disappear. For the time being, it is becoming more and more difficult to deliver basic public services and salaries are long time overdue.

This situation calls for a rapid reaction of the International Community because there is already famine in the whole Libya.

2.-The increasing activity and number of jihadists groups that contemplate Libya as a "Land for the Jihad".

The lack of central authority has given way to a lot of factions that are fighting for the political and economic power. The surge of radical elements and their spreading began in 2014 when

hardened Libyan fighters returned from Syria where they had founded the "Battar Brigade". The Jihadists in Libya can be classified between supporters of the Islamic State (IS) and followers of al-Qaeda and its regional affiliates mainly al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and Ansar-al-Shariah. Another troubling outcome is that Islamic State followers are expanding its presence from Darna thanks to the civil war chaos and has inserted itself between the rivals "Dignity" and "Dawn". The IS in Libya has declared its allegiance to the Bagdad Caliphate moving its base from Darna to Sirte, declaring this territory in February 15th the "Province of Tripolitania" as they had earlier named the Eastern part of former Libya the "Province of Cyrenaica". The terror of IS has expanded to the South by establishing there the "Province of Fezzan". Their main aim is to dominate other Islamic groups, mainly in Tripoli and Misrata, to bring them under the rule of IS.

In the three "Provinces" the IS has created recruiting and training centres to help other jihadists active in North Africa and the SAHEL to overthrow regimes they consider as heretics. The porosity of the frontiers is helping the IS with this aim.

3.-The absence of effective control along the Libyan frontiers is a fact that is worsening the control of the country and increasing the consequences of the civil war. Terrorist movements, smuggling, and all kind of traffics are taking place in the whole territory that has also become a source for traffic of arms of all kinds from the huge deposits Kaddafi had established along the Libyan Southern frontier. These arms reach as far as Nigeria, Somalia, Kenia and the SAHEL. Former elements of Kaddafi regime and terrorists receive from these illicit trades a lot of money that is not only used for increasing its capabilities but also to attract the population by supplying them with goods and food.

4.-Libya has transformed itself in the biggest platform for illegal immigrants arriving from Africa and the Middle East attempting to reach Europe thanks to the absence of frontier control mainly in the North shores and ports.

In fact in the present situation in Libya there are no means to stop the flow of immigrants that are encouraged by militias and terrorist groups because this trade is very lucrative. Besides within the immigrants jihadists can be inserted to commit terror acts on our soil.

Two years ago the EU created a mission to control the arrival and departure of immigrants to Libya but its members have moved to Tunisia due to the insecurity and the fear of being kidnapped.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY EFFORTS TO MAKE LIBYA A UNIFIED COUNTRY

The international organizations are striving to make possible an agreement among several Libyan factions in order to recreate a stable and effective central government. The United Nations (UN), through its Special Representative has organized several meetings to bring an end to the civil conflict and the creation of an effective authority.

However the negotiating positions of the Tobruk and Tripoli "authorities" are so far apart that it is almost impossible to reach any agreement. Moreover because the jihadists have great influence in the "Dignity" and "Dawn" movements by means of supporting them in the civil war, their interest is only peace if it is based on the "sharia".

The Organization of African States and the Arab League are supporting the UN mediation but their role is limited.

The EU considers that today's Libya constitutes a real threat for the Maghreb countries and also for Europe. The civil war, the militias and jihadists are not only hindering the UN peace efforts but are encouraging extremists to carry out violent actions in the neighbouring countries. The barbaric assassinations in the Tunes Museum are a token of their aims because the perpetrators came from Libya.

The EU High Representative for External Affairs and Security has well perceived the danger for Europe if the Libyan chaos goes on. She has declared that: "We should have no illusion on the fact that we can stay away from Libya. Libya will not stay away from us"

The Chairman of the European Council in the meeting of March 20th stated that: "Events in the Southern Mediterranean are dangerous for Europe... We remain committed to Libya transition and the work of the UN Special Representative. There must be an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and rapid agreement on a Government of National Unity... It is vital to continue talks about what more we can do together with our Southern neighbours to stabilize the whole region".

POSSIBLE WAY AHEAD

Therefore it should be considered carefully the nature of a possible European Union intervention in Libya to prevent that the present chaotic situation gets even worse and could even destabilize the whole North African region and the Sahel.

Perhaps the moment has arrived for the International Community to consider extreme measures to stop the bloodshed and anarchy in Libya. The partition of Libya might be one of the unwanted possible solutions to the existing chaos. There is a precedent with Sudan.

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