

LIBYA: OPERATION “ODYSSEY DAWN”; MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS ON DAYS 6 TO 10

By Claude MONIQUET

President of ESISC

1) Military strategy

On March 24, French Foreign Minister, Mr **Alain Juppé** said that he believes the military operations “**may take weeks, but not months**” and that “**coalition’s objectives cannot be expected to be achieved in just five days**”. He added that the **air strikes “have been a success”** and “**will continue as long as necessary**”.

After days of intense situation, the **allied finally agreed on a NATO joint command on the operations. NATO will only be in charge of the enforcement of the NFZ and air-strikes on the ground, targeting troops or C3I facilities will be under the coordination of an international “ad-hoc” Committee.** The NATO command and coordination center will be located in the Izmir base, in Turkey. **Nato envisages a “3 months operation, but the mission could be longer or shorter if necessary”,** it was said.

On March 27, it was said that the **Atlantic Alliance could also take the control of the ground attacks** but that the transfer “will take several days”.

British Defense Secretary, Liam Fox, said on March 27 that **the coalition “has no plans to supply arms to the rebels.”**

Conflicting signals continued to emerge on the global strategy with **U.S. Defense Secretary, Robert Gates,** saying the “**regime change is not sought in Libya**” as officials in Paris and London stated that to ousting of colonel Gaddafi was on the agenda. On March 28, French President and British PM issued a common statement saying “**Gaddafi must give up the power immediately**”.

On March 25, the **Russian news agency RIA-Novosti** quoted an unnamed “**high level Russian intelligence source**” saying that the international coalition “**is planning a ground operation in Libya**”, to be launched in “**late April or early May if the alliance fails to oust colonel Gaddafi**” with its current

strategy. On March 28, British PM **David Cameron** and French President **Nicolas Sarkozy** said they do not want “any occupation of Libya” and “respect Libyan national unity, sovereignty and independence.

2) Military situation on the theatre of operations

On March 24, French jets attacked, for the first time, an airbase located far in the interior of Libya, at 250 kilometers south of the Libyan coastline.

On March 24, the **Canadian army** deployed **Auroras reconnaissance aircraft** able to patrol 17 hours at a time.

On March 24, **Sudan** authorized nations enforcing the NFZ to use its airspace.

The **United Arab Emirates** are providing **12 planes** to the international Coalition. On March 25, it was announced that the **Qatari jets were flowing over Libya**. By March 27, **Qatar reinforced its contribution to the coalition forces and had 6 jets on zone**.

It was announced on March 25 that colonel Gaddafi was “**promoting all members of its military units**”.

Early on Saturday March 26, the **Libyan rebels entered the town of Ajdabiya**. The same day, they retook **Marsa el-Brega**. On March 27, they reached the outskirts of **Uqayla** and took **Ras-Lanuf** and **Bin Jawad**. **On March 28, it was said they took Sirte, the native town of colonel Gaddafi and a stronghold of his regime, but it was later denied by independent press reports**. Nevertheless, they took the control of **Nawfaliyah, between Bin Jawad and Sirte**.

Despite those successes, a U.S. military source said on Monday March 28, that the rebels are still outmatched by the regime forces and that **the coalition operation is the only element stopping forces loyal to Gaddafi to prevail**.

3) Diplomacy and Sanctions

Algeria said on March 24 that the international offensive **promotes terrorism and will create an “earthquake” that will affect Libya as well as all neighbouring countries**”.

The African Union invited representatives of the Libyan opposition and of colonel Gaddafi’s regime at a summit in Addis Ababa.

On March 25, **Uganda decided to implement sanctions** on Gaddafi’s regime, including a travel ban and the freeze of assets.

On March 25, French **President Nicolas Sarkozy said that Paris and London are “preparing a political and diplomatic solution”** to end the crisis in Libya.

On March 27, **the Libyan rebels said they will start “exporting oil from fields they control within a week”** and that Qatar accepted to market it.

On March 27, **Italy and Germany offered to launch a “roadmap” for a peace-building process** in Libya. The **rebels answered they will “never negotiate with Gaddafi”** who is a criminal and must stand trial before a tribunal.

On Monday, March 28, the **General Secretary of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) said that the Benghazi Libyan National Council (LNC) is “the only legitimate representative of the Libyan people”**.

On March 28, Turkish Prime Minister **Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced his country will take the control of the Bengazi’s airport** to facilitate “humanitarian operations”.

4) Terrorism and security focus

On Friday, **March 25, the Algerian daily el-Khabar reported that an Algerian terrorist wearing a explosive belt and coming from Libya was killed in Debdad, in the Illizi area, on the border with Libya.**

Those last days, rumours emerged, in North African intelligence services and in other services active on zone that al-Qaeda and other Jihadists groups could try to take advantage of the chaos in Libya to steal arms and missiles.

END