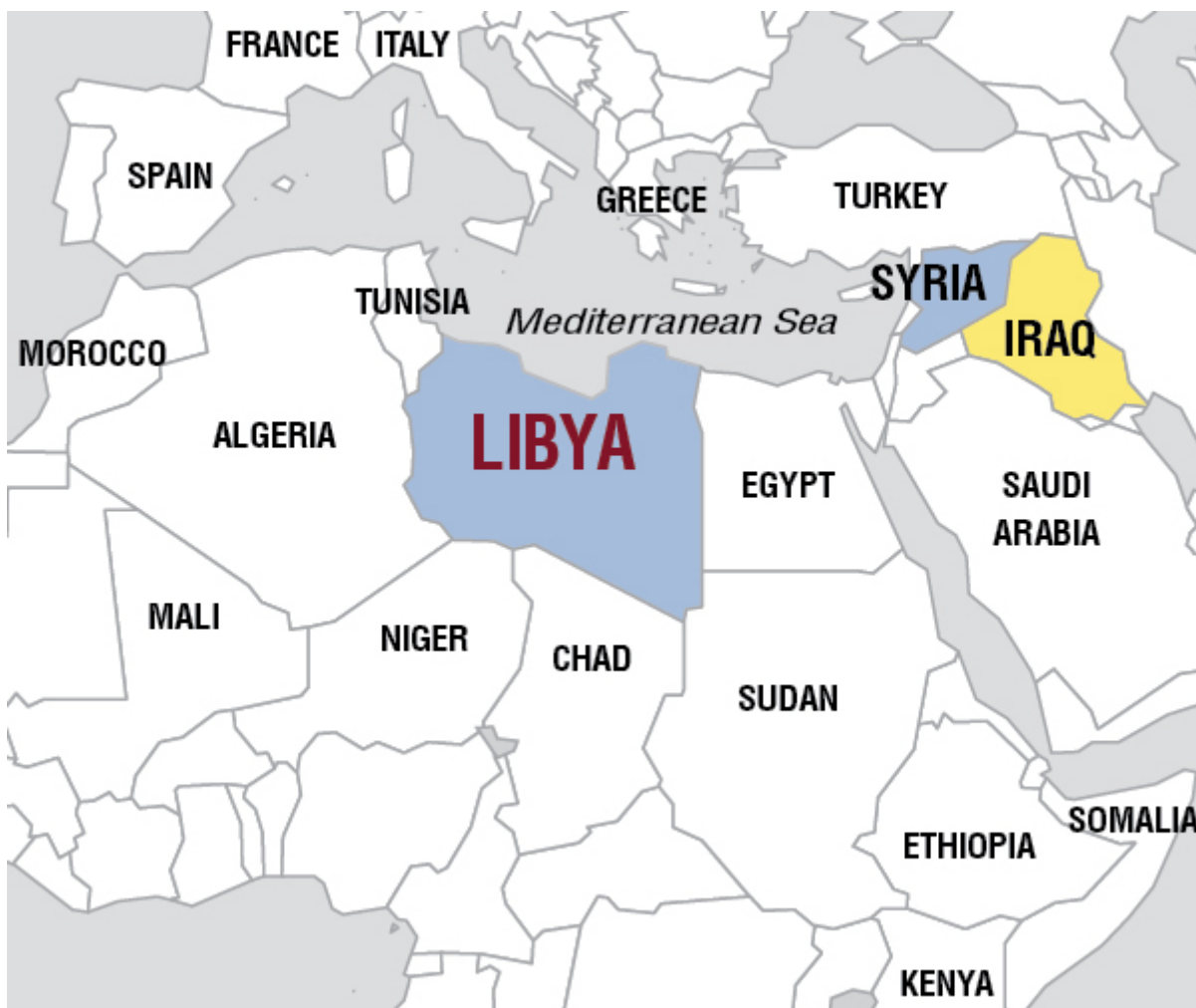


By Larry Everest

From [Revolution](#) | Original Article

The rulers of the U.S. empire are once again facing new difficulties and challenges in the greater Middle East region. Once again they feel compelled to escalate their military intervention—even though their own aggression contributed in a major way to the difficulties they now face, and even as they have few good options and no certain path to victory. Their invasions and bombing campaigns create incredible suffering for the masses of people—something hardly ever discussed in the ruling class' media. And their invasions exacerbate the global clash between Western imperialism and reactionary Islamic Jihad.



This time it's in Libya, an oil-rich North African country strategically located on the Mediterranean Sea.

On January 22, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford Jr., stated that the U.S. military was "looking to take decisive military action" against the reactionary jihadist Islamic State, or ISIS, which is now operating and gaining strength in Libya, which is in a state of political chaos without a functioning central government or military command. ISIS now has an estimated 3,000 fighters there, and controls the city of Surt (which lies between Libya's two largest cities, Tripoli and Benghazi) and 150 miles of Mediterranean coastline.

The exact scope of this "third front" in the war against ISIS (after Iraq and Syria) is not yet clear, but the *New York Times* reports that for the past year U.S. Special Operations forces have been trying to build alliances with Libyan militias, and that airstrikes and commando raids could start within weeks. (*NYT*, 11/22)

The U.S. is jumping into Libya at the same time it's escalating its war against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. The military is reportedly demanding hundreds more U.S. and allied "trainers, advisers and commandos" on top of the 3,700 U.S. troops already in Iraq. Meanwhile, the U.S. is planning to build a network of military bases "in Africa, Southwest Asia and the Middle East to aid operations against the Islamic State." This includes new "hubs" in Africa where thousands of U.S. forces are already operating. (*New York Times*, Jan 29 and Dec 10)

U.S. / European War on Libya: Leaving the People in Worse Hell on Earth

In February 2011, in the context of the "Arab Spring" uprisings in neighboring Tunisia and Egypt, sections of Libyan society rose up against Muammar Qaddafi's oppressive, 42-year-long rule. The Qaddafi regime attempted to violently suppress the protests. The European rulers along with the U.S. saw an opportunity to advance their interests in a region where Western imperialism is under all kinds of pressure and face all kinds of challenges from rivals and ISIS. So under the banner of "humanitarian intervention" to protect Libyan civilians the U.S. and its European allies unleashed a bombing campaign and other operations that led to the fall of the Qaddafi regime by August, 2011. In reality, the U.S. and its allies were waging a war for regime change. For them the Libyan uprising presented the need and opportunity to, as Raymond Lotta analyzed, create an "entirely new neocolonial regime... one that would be a more pliant tool of Western interests." (For a fuller discussion of the factors behind the decision by the U.S. and European powers to bring down the Qaddafi regime, see "[Revolution](#)")

[Interviews Raymond Lotta: The Events in Libya in Historical Perspective... Muammar Qaddafi in Class Perspective... The Question of Leadership in Communist Perspective](#)

“).

Since Qaddafi's overthrow, there has been no functioning government in Libya. Instead the country remains split between different reactionary factions—including some 1,700 armed groups and militias—operating in different parts of Libya and fighting each other for turf. Over 4,600 people have been killed in armed clashes in the last two years alone! .

Nearly 2.44 million people—a third of Libya's population—have been impacted by these reactionary conflicts. There are now shortages of food, water, and electricity. People often can't get medicines, public services or medical care—even though in the summer of 2015 the UN estimated that 2.5 million Libyans needed health care and some 400,000 needed food aid.

This nightmare has driven nearly a half a million Libyans from their homes—forcing people to live in “unfinished buildings, garages, collective shelters or public spaces.” (“Regrets of a Revolution? Libya After Qaddafi,” Sept. 29, 2015, *Frontline*).

In 2011, exposing the suffering of the Libyan people served U.S. interests, so the imperialist media daily stoked outrage and indignation over Qaddafi's crimes and Libya's humanitarian situation—even warning a “genocide” could take place. Now the people of Libya are suffering a humanitarian disaster of enormous proportions, and the U.S. and its European allies are the main factor behind that. More often than not, the rulers of the U.S. invoke or even recognize humanitarian disasters only to serve their imperialist agenda.

Between A Rock and a Hard Place: The Gamble of Escalation

Libya's fragmentation and the expansion of ISIS and other jihadist forces has created even greater and more dangerous challenges for the U.S. and Europe than the 2011 Libyan uprising.

U.S. officials warn that ISIS is trying to consolidate and expand its base area in Libya, and link up with other Islamist and jihadist forces now operating across Africa, including in Tunisia, Algeria, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Chad, Sudan and Somalia. “Their threat has grown as Libya—with its ungoverned spaces, oil, ports, and proximity to Europe and the Middle East—becomes a budding hub of operations for both Al Qaeda and the Islamic State to reach deeper into Africa,” the *New York Times* reports. (Jan. 1) “Libya could present the West with challenges equal to those an American-led coalition faces in fighting the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.” (NYT Jan. 26).

This could accelerate the unraveling of the U.S. dominated order in Africa and the Middle East, where states including Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Somalia, Mali, and Chad are fragmenting, and threatening to engulf their neighbors, including key U.S. allies like Turkey and Jordan. This, together with the wars in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen and the spread of jihadist forces across the region has the potential to unravel the basic fabric of U.S. and Western imperialist domination of these regions, which has been and remains key to their global power. It has created openings for other reactionary powers to challenge the U.S.

So the U.S. rulers feel compelled to act, and say their new military campaign is aimed at preventing ISIS from consolidating its foothold in Libya and putting a “firewall” between it and other African countries. They do so even realizing the danger their actions will lead to new dangers. The invasions and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq failed and then in Libya overthrowing a government through airpower and covert operations, in hopes of cobbling together a new regime of local pro-imperialist forces, has backfired as well.

So escalating in Libya is a big gamble for the U.S. that could create new problems and difficulties. The *New York Times* calls the move “deeply troubling,” warning that “Libya’s neighbors are all too weak or unstable to lead or even host a military intervention, and editorializing “A new military intervention in Libya would represent a significant progression of a war that could easily spread to other countries on the continent.”

What Is OUR Responsibility?

People need to confront the reality that imperialism’s needs and goals are to dominate and exploit countries like Libya, no matter how much imperialist commanders-in-chief like Obama yammer about democracy and liberating people. And people need to confront the reality—proven by the last 14 years of war—that supporting either imperialism or jihad

strengthens both and there's an urgent need to bring forward another, emancipating path.

All this is why it is urgent now to organize visible resistance to any new war in Libya, to dig deeply into why the U.S. is endlessly waging wars, to face the horrors this has created for hundreds of millions in the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa, and get seriously into the liberating communist revolution brought forward and being led by Bob Avakian—BA!

In short, there is a need for people in the U.S. to visibly and energetically oppose the crimes of “our own” rulers—in this case any new war in Libya in the name of combating “terrorism.” *And,* for a radically positive and liberating alternative to both Western imperialism and reactionary Islamic Jihad to get on the map, around the world.

As we wrote previously in these pages:

“The U.S. and these other imperialists aren't waging war to “stop terrorism.” They're conducting wars, military interventions, and maneuvering diplomatically to preserve the system of global capitalist exploitation that they dominate, a system which grinds up, crushes, uproots, and casts off literally billions of people. So when the U.S. acts, they act in order to destroy whatever they happen to feel is in the way of their domination and/or to set up or protect oppressive relations and oppressive regimes which maintain this whole system—including Islamic fundamentalist forces when that serves their purposes....

“Imperialism and Islamic fundamentalism are NOT the only alternatives today. There actually is a viable chance to make revolution and bring into being a radically different, liberating society based on Bob Avakian's new synthesis of communism. This revolution will come out of the existing contradictions of the system AND the work of revolutionaries now. This revolution is the ONLY source of real hope in the terrible situation confronting humanity now.

“Strengthening imperialism—the very system responsible for the vast majority of the suffering and destruction on Earth today—including by supporting its wars and military machine—is only going to perpetuate this misery....

“We do all this as part of getting to a whole better world—and right now, in this country, preparing the ground, preparing the people, and preparing the vanguard—getting ready for the time when millions can be led to go for revolution, all-out, with a real chance to win. (See [“Why We Should NOT Root for Our Own Rulers... And Why It’s Better If They LOSE Their Wars,”](#)

Revolution

, November 30, 2015)