

Washington in Fierce Debate on Arming Libyan Rebels

By [MARK LANDLER](#), [ELISABETH BUMILLER](#) and [STEVEN LEE MYERS](#)

*This article is by **Mark Landler, Elisabeth Bumiller and Steven Lee Myers.***

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration is engaged in a fierce debate over whether to supply weapons to the rebels in Libya, senior officials said on Tuesday, with some fearful that providing arms would deepen American involvement in a civil war and that some fighters may have links to [Al Qaeda](#).

The debate has drawn in the White House, the State Department and the Pentagon, these officials said, and has prompted an urgent call for intelligence about a ragtag band of rebels who are waging a town-by-town battle against Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#), from a base in eastern Libya long suspected of supplying terrorist recruits.

“Al Qaeda in that part of the country is obviously an issue,” a senior official said.

On a day when Libyan forces counterattacked, fears about the rebels surfaced publicly on Capitol Hill on Tuesday when the military commander of [NATO](#), Adm. [James G. Stavridis](#), told a Senate hearing that there were “flickers” in intelligence reports about the presence of Qaeda and [Hezbollah](#) members among the anti-Qaddafi forces. No full picture of the opposition has emerged, Admiral Stavridis said. While eastern Libya was the center of Islamist protests in the late 1990s, it is unclear how many groups retain ties to Al Qaeda.

The French government, which has led the international charge against Colonel Qaddafi, has placed mounting pressure on the United States to provide greater assistance to the rebels. The question of how best to support the opposition dominated an international conference about Libya on Tuesday in London.

While Secretary of State [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) said the administration had not yet decided whether to actually transfer arms, she reiterated that the United States had a right to do so, despite an arms embargo on Libya, because of the [United Nations Security Council](#)'s broad resolution authorizing military action to protect civilians.

In a reflection of the seriousness of the administration's debate, Mr. Obama said Tuesday that he was keeping his options open on **arming the rebels. “I'm not ruling it out, but I'm also not ruling it in,” Mr. Obama told NBC News.** “We're still making an assessment partly about what Qaddafi's forces are going to be doing. Keep in mind, we've been at this now for nine days.”

But some administration officials argue that supplying arms would further entangle the United States in a drawn-out civil war because the rebels would need to be trained to use any weapons, even relatively simple rifles and shoulder-fired anti-armor weapons. This could mean sending trainers. One official said the United States might simply let others supply the weapons.

It also carries echoes of previous American efforts to arm rebels, in Angola, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and elsewhere, many of which backfired. The United States has a deep, often unsuccessful, history of arming insurgencies.

Mr. Obama pledged on Monday that he would not commit American ground troops to Libya and said that the job of transforming the country into a democracy was primarily for the Libyan people and the international community. But he promised that the United States would help the rebels in this struggle.

In London, Mrs. Clinton and other Western leaders made it clear that the NATO-led operation would end only with the removal of Colonel Qaddafi, even if that was not the stated goal of the [United Nations](#) resolution.

Mrs. Clinton — who met for a second time with a senior opposition leader, Mahmoud Jibril — acknowledged that as a group, the rebels were largely a mystery. “We don’t know as much as we would like to know and as much as we expect we will know,” she said at a news conference.

In his testimony, Admiral Stavridis said, “We are examining very closely the content, composition, the personalities, who are the leaders of these opposition forces.”

The coalition members discussed other ways to help the rebels, like humanitarian aid and money, Mrs. Clinton said. Some of the more than \$30 billion in frozen Libyan funds may be channeled to the opposition.

But a spokesman for the rebels, Mahmoud Shammam, said they would welcome arms, contending that with weaponry they would already have defeated Colonel Qaddafi’s forces. “We ask for political support more than arms,” Mr. Shammam said, “but if we have both, that would be good.”

So far, the rebels have obtained arms from defecting Qaddafi loyalists, as well as from abandoned ammunitions depots.

A European diplomat said France was adamant that the rebels be more heavily armed and was in discussions with the Obama administration about how France would bring this about. “We strongly believe that it should happen,” said the diplomat, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal deliberations.

Senator [Carl Levin](#), a Michigan Democrat and chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he had had conversations with two senior administration officials about this issue. Mr. Levin said he was most concerned about how the rebels would use the weapons after a cease-fire. “Would they stop fighting if they had momentum, or would they be continuing to use those weapons?” he asked.

Gene A. Cretz, the American ambassador to Libya, said last week that he was impressed by the democratic instincts of the opposition leaders and that he did not believe that they were dominated by extremists. But he acknowledged that there was no way to know if they were “100 percent kosher, so to speak.”

Bruce O. Riedel, a former [C.I.A.](#) analyst and a senior fellow at the [Brookings Institution](#), said some who had fought as insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan were bound to have returned home to Libya. “The question we can’t answer is, Are they 2 percent of the opposition? Are they 20 percent? Or are they 80 percent?” he said.

Even if the administration resolves these concerns, military officials said it was unclear to them how an effort to arm the rebels would be carried out.

They said the arms most likely to be of use were relatively light and simple shoulder-fired anti-armor weapons for defense against tanks, as well as rifles like Soviet AK-47s and communications equipment. Although these weapons are not especially sophisticated, months, if not years, of on-the-ground training would still be necessary.

Even with training, anti-armor weapons and rifles would allow the rebels only to consolidate their gains and hold the territory they have, said Nathan Freier, a senior fellow at the [Center for Strategic and International Studies](#).

One crucial voice, Defense Secretary [Robert M. Gates](#) has experience in the unintended consequences of arming rebels: As a C.I.A. official in the late 1980s, he funneled weapons to the Islamic fundamentalists who ousted the Soviets from Kabul. Some later became the [Taliban](#) fighting the United States in Afghanistan.

Mark Landler and Elisabeth Bumiller reported from Washington, and Steven Lee Myers from London.

Kämpfe in Libyen

Turnschuh-Truppe auf der Flucht

Aus Ben Dschawad berichtet [Matthias Gebauer](#)

Nach den Luftangriffen der Allianz kämpften sich die Rebellen in Libyen schnell nach Westen vor. Nun wurde die chaotisch agierende Guerilla-Truppe von den Gaddafi-Einheiten weit vor Sirte zurückgeschlagen, der Vormarsch ist erst mal gestoppt. An der Front macht sich Frust breit.

Abdul Karim Najjir sieht aus wie ein echter Guerilla-Kämpfer, und er gefällt sich in der Rolle. Um den Bauch hängen schwere Patronengürtel, darunter eine zerrissene Tarnuniform. Seine Augen versteckt er hinter einer dunklen Ray-Ban-Sonnenbrille. Najjir kommt gerade zurück von der Front, berichtet er. Rund zwei Kilometer vor Ben Dschawad, dem westlichsten Nest, das die Rebellen bei ihrem Marsch in Richtung Westlibyen unter ihre Kontrolle gebracht haben, hockt er auf einem Toyota-Geländewagen. Um ihn lungern auf der Ladefläche mehrere Kampfgenossen. Nur wenige tragen schwere Waffen. Für Fotos von Reportern aber will keiner den martialischen Posen des Chefs nachstehen. Also wird Najjirs Kalaschnikow brav herumgereicht.

Ihr Anführer erzählt derweil vom Kampf gegen die Gaddafi-Truppen. Es sind keine Heldengeschichten. Gestern Nacht waren er und mehrere andere Jeep-Besatzungen kurz hinter Ben Dschawad in eine simple Falle getappt. "Wir haben mehrere Panzer von Gaddafi gesehen, sie haben weiße Fahnen geschwenkt, als ob sie sich ergeben wollten", berichtet er.

Doch kaum waren die Rebellen den Panzern auf einige hundert Meter entgegengefahren, eröffneten Heckenschützen das Feuer auf die Aufständischen. Mehrere von Najjirs Männern wurden verletzt. Nur mit Mühe gelang die Flucht zurück nach Ben Dschawad, der kleinen Ortschaft, die nur aus einigen kleinen sandfarbenen Häusern und einer Tankstelle besteht. "Wir waren dumm", gibt Najjir zu.

Hektischer Rückzug nach Osten

Während Najjir weiter erzählt, es ist gegen zwölf Uhr mittags, hat hinter ihm der hektische Rückzug der Rebellen zurück in Richtung Osten begonnen. Mehrere Jeeps waren zuvor von einem vorgelagerten Checkpoint weiter westlich gekommen. Die Männer riefen, Gaddafis Einheiten rückten vor. Innerhalb von Sekunden brach Panik aus.

Nun rasen Hunderte Jeeps über die Küstenstraße zurück nach Osten, dazwischen Privatautos mit Fronttouristen. Im Chaos behindern sich die Wagen, rammen sich gegenseitig, immer wieder stockt der Verkehr komplett. Aus der Ferne sind Panzerschüsse zu hören. Wie weit die weg sind, vermag niemand abzuschätzen. Najjir sagt nur, es sei nicht mehr sicher hier, man solle sich lieber etwas zurückziehen.

Rund zwei Kilometer weiter in Richtung Osten stoppt der Konvoi. Alle schauen zurück nach Ben Dschawad. Dort schlagen Granaten ein, Rauchpilze steigen aus der Ortschaft auf. Spätestens zu diesem Zeitpunkt ist der Vormarsch der Rebellen, der durch die [Luftschläge des Westens](#) in den vergangenen Tagen rasant an Tempo aufgenommen hatte, vorerst gestoppt. Nur einige wenige todesmutige Rebellen feuern weiter Raketen in Richtung der Stellungen. Jeder Schuss wird von lauten "Alluah Akhbar"-Rufen begleitet, die meisten der Rebellen stehen mit ihren Smartphones auf den Ladeflächen und filmen den Moment.

Die Szenen an der vordersten Front im Machtkampf in Libyen sind symbolisch: Trotz der Luftschläge, mit denen die Koalition der Willigen den Rebellen einige Tage lang den Weg nach Westen freigeschossen haben, ist die zusammengewürfelte Truppe aus Freiwilligen, [die in Turbo-Lehrgängen geschult wurden](#), und ehemaligen Armeesoldaten kaum in der Lage, den Kampf gegen Gaddafis Armee aufzunehmen. Die Rebellen mögen durch die Intervention der Kampfjets so weit gekommen sein, wie sie zu Beginn der Krise schon einmal waren. Nun aber stehen sie einer strategisch geschulten und erfahrenen Armee gegenüber, die sich rund um Gaddafis Geburtsstadt Sirte fest eingegraben hat.

Chaos bei den Rebellen erschwert den Kampf

Sirte, dessen Befreiung die Rebellen am Montag schon frenetisch gefeiert haben, liegt nun wieder in weiter Ferne. Wenn die Berichte der Frontkämpfer stimmen, haben die Gaddafi-Truppen fast hundert Kilometer vor der Stadt mit Panzern und Artillerie eine massive Sperre aufgebaut, die bisher nicht von den Kampfjets angegriffen worden ist. "Wir brauchen weitere Luftschläge, sonst kommen wir nicht voran", sagt auch Najjir. Er will wissen, was es eigentlich bedeutet, dass die Nato nun das Kommando über die militärische Operation aus der Luft übernimmt. Auch von der [Libyen-Konferenz in London](#) hat er gehört, von den Zweifeln der Türkischen Regierung. Verschwunden ist die Selbstsicherheit, mit der die Rebellen eben noch aufgetreten sind.

Najjir und seine Männer springen von ihrem Pick-up. Einige von ihnen machen sich zum Mittagsgebet bereit, waschen sich die Füße und knien sich in den Wüstensand. Andere eilen zu den Lieferwagen, die in Plastikbeuteln Verpflegung für die Rebellen aus Bengasi herangeschafft haben. Der Chef bleibt auf der Ladefläche sitzen und gibt weiter Interviews. Der Rückzug sei nur ein Manöver, sagt er mit fester Stimme. "Wir kämpfen hier bis zum Tod, werden unser Gebiet nicht aufgeben." Doch warum stemmen sie sich dann jetzt nicht gegen die Gaddafi-Einheiten, warum sichern die Rebellen nicht die Anhöhen rund um die Straße? "Erstmal müssen wir frühstücken", sagt Najjir, "essen müssen wir doch alle." Bei dem Satz muss auch er lachen.

Die Rebellen haben zwar Tausende Männer mobilisiert, aber die Lage vor Ben Dschawad offenbart, wie sehr eine zentrale Führung fehlt. Es gibt weder einen Kommandeur aller Einheiten noch eine stringente Kommunikation unter den Kleingruppen. "Jeder Jeep hier agiert allein, rückt entweder an die Front vor oder zieht sich zurück", erzählt Wadi Ahmad. Der 21-Jährige war früher Soldat unter Gaddafi, als einer der wenigen hier trägt er eine ordentliche Uniform am Leib und hat ausreichend Munition dabei. Vier Wochen schon kämpft er auf der Seite der Rebellen, an vorderster Front hat er die erfolgreichen Operationen in Adschdabija oder Ras Lanuf miterlebt.

Wadi ist ein stolzer junger Mann und redet doch sehr offen über die Schwächen der eigenen Truppen. "Wir agieren ohne jede Kontrolle, jeder macht hier, was er will", sagt er enttäuscht, "so werden wir den Soldaten von Gaddafi nicht viel entgegensetzen können." Er selbst traut sich nicht, als Führer aufzutreten oder wenigstens einige Einheiten der Rebellen zu koordinieren, da viele ihm, dem Ex-Soldaten Gaddafis, nicht trauen.

"Mir bleibt nichts anderes übrig, als weiter mein Bestes zu geben", sagt er, "doch ohne einen Führer werden wir den Kampf gegen Gaddafi nicht gewinnen können."

Dettes : nouvelles sanctions contre la Grèce et le Portugal

Par [Guillaume Guichard](#) 29/03/2011 | Mise à jour : 20:49 [Réactions](#) (20)

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Les deux pays d'Europe du sud inquiètent l'agence de notation Standard & Poor's, qui a dégradé leur note. Les objectifs de réduction du déficit risquent de ne pas être atteints, redoute-t-elle.

La crise de la dette est revenue sur le devant de la scène. L'agence de notation Standard & Poor's (S&P) a dégradé coup sur coup les notes des **dettes de la Grèce** et **du Portugal** ce mardi, respectivement de BB à BB- et de BBB à BBB-. Et ce n'est peut-être pas fini: l'une comme l'autre ont été placées sous surveillance négative, ce qui signifie qu'une nouvelle baisse des notes est possible dans les trois mois, explique l'agence de notation.

Les taux d'intérêt à deux ans portugais a bondi de 0,25 point de pourcentage, à 7,68%. Celui de la Grèce a grimpé de 0,35 point de pourcentage, à 15,29%, rapporte Bloomberg. La décision de l'agence est «déséquilibrée» et «injuste» car elle ne prend pas en compte les récentes décisions de la zone euro, a estimé le ministère des finances grec. «Les marchés ne s'attendaient pas à des révisions aussi rapides de la part de Standard & Poor's notamment sur le Portugal, dont la note a déjà été dégradée de deux crans la semaine passée», a réagi Cyril Régnat, de Natixis.

Doutes sur les finances publiques

S&P ne croit pas à un retour rapide à l'équilibre des finances des deux États. Dans le cas de la Grèce, «le déficit public pourrait dépasser l'objectif gouvernemental de 9,6% du produit intérieur brut (PIB) en 2010», s'inquiète l'agence dans un communiqué. «De plus, nous pensons que le gouvernement ne surveille pas de suffisamment près les dépenses» pour inverser la tendance en 2011. Pour ne rien arranger, les revenus fiscaux ne sont pas non plus au rendez-vous et rien ne dit que cela va s'arranger, craint en substance S&P.

Même analyse pour le Portugal. «L'environnement économique pourrait encore se détériorer au-delà de nos prévisions», redoute l'agence. Ce mardi, la Banque centrale portugaise a estimé que le PIB devrait reculer de 1,4% en 2011, contre 1,3% estimé auparavant. Elle a également divisé par deux ses perspectives pour 2012, avec une croissance dorénavant attendue à 0,3% et non plus de 0,6%.

Impasse politique

De surcroît, ajoute l'agence, «**l'impasse politique** [dans laquelle se trouve le pays après la démission du premier ministre José Socrates] pourrait remettre en cause l'application stricte des plans de rigueur adoptés, ce qui pourrait mener à des dérapages financiers.»

L'adoption d'un **nouveau mécanisme européen d'aide financière** aux États en difficulté, le Mécanisme permanent de stabilité (MES) vendredi dernier à Bruxelles, contribue également à inquiéter l'agence de notation. Athènes et Lisbonne ont toutes les chances, selon elle, d'y avoir recours en 2013, vu leur situation budgétaire actuelle. Cette perspective a motivé entre autre la dégradation de leur note ce mardi.

En dépit de la pression accrue des marchés, le Premier ministre démissionnaire José Socrates a justement affirmé mardi soir que le Portugal restait «très déterminé» à ne pas demander une aide extérieure. «Le gouvernement n'a aucune intention de le faire», a répondu le chef du gouvernement socialiste lors d'un point de presse. «Simplement, les conditions se sont aggravées. Elles se sont aggravées pour nos banques, notre économie et notre République», a-t-il reconnu.

Mécanisme européen préjudiciable

Deux des nouvelles dispositions du MES, qui entrera en action en 2013, «sont préjudiciables aux investisseurs privés ayant investi dans les dettes souveraines européennes», argumente S&P. D'abord, le recours au mécanisme pourrait être subordonné à une renégociation de la dette avec les investisseurs. En clair, ces derniers devraient faire des concessions et perdre de l'argent à cette occasion. Ensuite, le pays en difficulté devra en priorité rembourser le MES, avant ses créanciers privés, tels que les banques et autres établissements financiers. Une disposition qui accroît les risques pour ces derniers d'être mal remboursés.

Libye : la France prête à aider militairement les rebelles

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Un rebelle libyen à Ras Lanouf. Crédits photo : ARIS MESSINIS/AFP

EN DIRECT - Paris s'est dit prêt à discuter avec ses alliés d'une aide militaire aux rebelles libyens, une possibilité également envisagée par Washington. Sur le terrain, deux fortes explosions ont été entendues mardi à Tripoli.

• Paris et Washington évoquent une aide militaire aux rebelles

La France est prête à discuter avec ses alliés d'une aide militaire aux rebelles en Libye, a déclaré mardi le chef de la diplomatie française, Alain Juppé, tout en soulignant que ce n'était pas prévu par les récentes résolutions de l'ONU sur ce pays. Il n'a pas non plus précisé la nature de l'aide dont Paris entend discuter.

L'ambassadrice américaine à l'ONU, Susan Rice, avait indiqué plus tôt que les États-Unis «n'excluaient pas» de fournir une assistance militaire aux insurgés libyens afin de les aider à renverser le colonel Kadhafi. Selon des sources américaines, la résolution 1973 de l'ONU, qui «autorise toutes les mesures nécessaires» pour protéger les populations civiles, permettrait d'éventuelles livraisons d'armes ou de la formation militaire.

Lundi, le chef du Conseil national de transition (CNT) libyen, Moustapha Abdeljalil, avait fait état pour la rébellion d'un «besoin urgent d'armes légères».



À Londres, la conférence internationale a créé un «Groupe de contact» politique sur la Libye. Crédits photo : Stefan Rousseau/AP

• Un «Groupe de contact» créé à Londres

À Londres, **la conférence internationale** est convenue mardi de confirmer officiellement la création d'un «Groupe de contact» politique sur la Libye, dont la prochaine réunion aura lieu au Qatar. C'est le seul pays arabe, avec les Emirats arabes unis, à participer aux opérations en Libye. Par la suite, la présidence du groupe sera assurée à tour de rôle «par des pays de la région et au-delà».

La conférence de Londres, qui a réuni une quarantaine de pays et d'organisations, a fixé trois missions au Groupe de contact : «assurer le leadership et la direction politique d'ensemble des efforts internationaux, en coordination étroite avec l'ONU, l'Union africaine, la Ligue arabe, l'Organisation de la conférence islamique (OCI) et l'Union européenne ; fournir une plateforme en vue de coordonner la réponse internationale sur la Libye ; et fournir un espace commun au sein de la communauté internationale pour des contacts avec les parties libyennes».

Les participants ont en outre réaffirmé leur «engagement fort pour la souveraineté, l'indépendance, l'intégrité territoriale et l'unité nationale de la Libye». Se prévalant d'une «coalition élargie», les participants se sont félicités du «succès» des opérations militaires sur le terrain, qui ont permis de «protéger un nombre illimité de civils et de détruire de facto les capacités aériennes de Kadhafi». Réaffirmant leurs «contributions aux opérations militaires», ils ont exigé à nouveau un «cessez-le-feu immédiat» et la fin de «toutes les attaques contre les

civils et un accès sans entrave à l'aide humanitaire». Un consensus s'est également dégagé «à l'unanimité» pour dire que «Kadhafi doit quitter le pays», a déclaré le chef de la diplomatie italienne, Franco Frattini.

• Un diplomate français auprès de la rébellion

Le 10 mars, la France avait été le premier pays à reconnaître le CNT libyen, qui rassemble **les opposants au colonel Kadhafi**. Mardi, un ambassadeur nommé par la France a pris ses fonctions de représentant de la France auprès de l'opposition libyenne à Benghazi, fief de la rébellion contre Mouammar Kadhafi, a déclaré le chef de la diplomatie française, Alain Juppé.

«Nous avons organisé la présence diplomatique de la France à Benghazi auprès du Conseil national de transition, en la personne de l'un de nos diplomates qui s'est porté volontaire», a indiqué le ministre. Antoine Sivan, diplomate de 53 ans qui parle arabe, a occupé plusieurs postes dans la région et a notamment été sous-directeur pour le Moyen-Orient au ministère des Affaires étrangères, à Paris.

«M. Sivan est arrivé aujourd'hui à Benghazi. Il a une fonction diplomatique, il n'est pas ambassadeur car nous n'avons pas formellement reconnu un Etat à travers le Conseil national de transition», a précisé Alain Juppé. C'est «le responsable diplomatique chargé des relations avec le Conseil national de transition».

• Fortes explosions à Tripoli

Les raids alliés se poursuivront en Libye jusqu'à ce que Mouammar Kadhafi se conforme aux demandes de l'ONU et arrête en particulier les attaques contre les civils, a averti mardi à Londres la secrétaire d'État américaine Hillary Clinton.

Mardi après-midi, deux fortes explosions ont secoué Tripoli, dans le secteur de la résidence du dirigeant libyen. Des avions avaient auparavant survolé la capitale, cible de raids de la coalition internationale depuis le début de son intervention en Libye. En même temps, sept fortes détonations ont retenti à Tajoura, dans la banlieue-est de la capitale. Selon un habitant du quartier, des avions ont largué cinq bombes sur un site militaire situé dans ce quartier.

Lundi soir, la coalition internationale a mené des raids sur des positions des forces loyales au dirigeant libyen, dans les régions de Mezda (centre) et Gharyan (ouest), selon l'agence officielle libyenne Jana et des témoins. La coalition internationale a bombardé la ville de Sourmane, située à 70 km à l'ouest de Tripoli, ont rapporté les médias officiels libyens. Des objectifs civils et militaires auraient été pris pour cibles, rapporte de son côté Jana.



Un soldat libyen dans les rues de Misrata, lundi. Crédits photo : AHMED JADALLAH/REUTERS

• «Misrata est en danger»

Dans l'est du pays, les rebelles ont reculé mardi sous le feu des forces fidèles à Kadhafi. **Leur avancée** avait été stoppée la veille par un sérieux accrochage avec les forces gouvernementales à quelques dizaines de kilomètres de Syrte, la ville natale du colonel, dont ils veulent s'emparer.

À Misrata, troisième ville du pays dont plusieurs secteurs sont toujours sous le contrôle des insurgés, les forces loyales au colonel Kadhafi ont avancé mardi à coups d'obus de chars, selon un porte-parole de la rébellion. «Misrata est en danger, les forces du criminel (Mouammar Kadhafi) avancent dans la ville et les chars tirent aveuglement», a indiqué ce porte-parole. Selon lui, les forces loyales ne contrôlent plus que la partie nord-ouest de la ville. «Contrairement à ce qui s'est passé à Benghazi, les avions de la coalition n'ont pas tiré sur les chars qui sont déjà à l'intérieur de la ville, par crainte de faire des victimes parmi les civils», a-t-il expliqué.

Le porte-parole a par ailleurs fait état d'une «situation humanitaire catastrophique». Selon un médecin de l'hôpital de la ville, les forces loyales au colonel Kadhafi ont tué au moins 142 personnes et en ont blessé plus de 1400 autres dans leur offensive à Misrata depuis le 18 mars.

» **REPORTAGE - La course folle des rebelles sur la route de Syrte**

- Kadhafi met en garde la coalition

Libye : Paris envoie un ambassadeur à Benghazi

LibyePar lefigaro.fr

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Benghazi à l'heure de la grande prière, vendredi dernier. Crédits photo : SUHAIB SALEM/REUTERS

EN DIRECT - Paris avait été la première capitale à reconnaître le Conseil national de transition des opposants libyens qui se trouve justement dans cette ville. Sur le terrain, les forces loyales au colonel Kadhafi ont gagné du terrain à Misrata et dans l'est du pays.

• Un ambassadeur français auprès de la rébellion

Un ambassadeur nommé par la France, Antoine Sivan, est en voie de prendre ses fonctions à Benghazi, fief de la rébellion libyenne contre Mouammar Kadhafi, a indiqué un responsable français sous le couvert de l'anonymat.

Antoine Sivan a quitté la France dimanche pour la Libye, où il devait se rendre par la route depuis l'Égypte. Ce diplomate de 53 ans, qui parle arabe, a occupé plusieurs postes dans la région et a notamment été sous-directeur pour le Moyen-Orient au ministère des Affaires étrangères, à Paris.

Le 10 mars, la France avait été le premier pays à reconnaître le Conseil national de transition (CNT) libyen, qui rassemble les opposants au colonel Kadhafi. Nicolas Sarkozy avait alors fait savoir qu'il enverrait un ambassadeur à Benghazi. La prise de fonctions de cet ambassadeur pourrait être officiellement confirmée mardi à Londres, en marge de la **conférence internationale sur l'avenir de la Libye**. Une quarantaine de pays sont attendus pour cette **première réunion de ce «groupe de contact»** sur la Libye, chargé du «pilotage politique» des frappes militaires désormais sous commandement de l'Organisation du traité de l'Atlantique Nord (Otan) et de la préparation de l'après-Kadhafi.

Lundi, à la veille du sommet, Nicolas Sarkozy et le premier ministre britannique David Cameron avaient rendu publique une déclaration commune plaidant pour que le CNT, dont ils reconnaissent le «rôle pionnier», mène un «dialogue politique national» afin de parvenir à des élections libres. Ils appelaient en outre les partisans du colonel Kadhafi à «le quitter avant qu'il ne soit trop tard».

• «Misrata est en danger»

Les rebelles ont reculé mardi dans l'est sous le feu des forces fidèles à Kadhafi. **Leur avancée** avait été stoppée la veille par un sérieux accrochage avec les forces gouvernementales à quelques dizaines de kilomètres de Syrte, la ville natale du colonel, dont ils veulent s'emparer.

A Misrata, troisième ville du pays dont plusieurs secteurs sont toujours sous le contrôle des insurgés, les forces loyales au colonel Kadhafi ont avancé mardi à coups d'obus de chars, a indiqué un porte-parole de la rébellion. «Misrata est en danger, les forces du criminel (Mouammar Kadhafi) avancent dans la ville et les chars tirent aveuglement», a indiqué ce porte-parole. Selon lui, les forces loyales ne contrôlent plus que la partie nord-ouest de la ville. «Contrairement à ce qui s'est passé à Benghazi, les avions de la coalition n'ont pas tiré sur les chars qui sont déjà à l'intérieur de la ville, par crainte de faire des victimes parmi les civils», a-t-il expliqué.

Le porte-parole a par ailleurs fait état d'une «situation humanitaire catastrophique». Selon un médecin de l'hôpital de la ville, les forces loyales au colonel Kadhafi ont tué au moins 142 personnes et en ont blessé plus de 1400 autres dans leur offensive à Misrata depuis le 18 mars.

» **Pétrole : les rebelles libyens vont relancer les exportations**

• Kadhafi met en garde la coalition

Le dirigeant libyen, Mouammar Kadhafi, a exhorté mardi le «groupe de contact» sur la Libye, qui se réunit à Londres, à mettre fin à «l'offensive barbare» contre son pays. «Laissez la Libye aux Libyens, vous êtes en train de vous livrer à une opération d'extermination d'un peuple en sécurité et de détruire un pays en développement», dit-il dans un message publié par l'agence officielle Jana.

«Vous ne réalisez pas en Europe et aux Etats-unis que cette opération militaire barbare et maléfique ressemble aux campagnes de Hitler alors qu'il envahissait l'Europe et bombardait la Grande Bretagne», ajoute-t-il. «Pourquoi vous attaquez quelqu'un qui combat le réseau d'al-Qaida ?», interroge le colonel au pouvoir depuis 42 ans, qui accuse les rebelles d'agir pour le compte du réseau de Ben Laden. «Laissez l'Union africaine gérer la crise, la Libye acceptera tout ce que cette union décidera», assure-t-il enfin.

• «Après la victoire nous jugerons Kadhafi»

Le ministre britannique des Affaires étrangères, William Hague, a estimé lundi que Mouammar Kadhafi devait faire face à la Cour pénale internationale (CPI). Il n'a toutefois pas exclu que le colonel cherche refuge à l'étranger dans le cadre d'une solution politique au conflit.

Sur France 2 la veille, le chef du CNT libyen, Moustapha Abdeljalil, avait déclaré que Mouammar Kadhafi serait jugé en Libye «après la victoire» de l'insurrection «pour tous les crimes qu'il a commis». «Nous essaierons de construire un pays libre, démocratique, qui respecte les droits de l'homme et l'alternance politique», avait-il assuré, estimant que le peuple libyen avait fait «un choix difficile, celui d'affronter un tyran». Et alors que les combats font toujours rage dans le pays, l'ancien ministre de la Justice - qui vit désormais caché - avait fait état pour la rébellion d'un «besoin urgent d'armes légères».

• Les frappes de la coalition se poursuivent



Les insurgés ont été obligés de refluer à Ben Jawad et de répliquer à l'artillerie lourde. Crédits photo : ARIS MESSINIS/AFP

Lundi soir, la coalition internationale a mené des raids sur des positions des forces loyales au dirigeant libyen, dans les régions de Mezda (centre) et Gharyan (ouest), selon l'agence officielle libyenne Jana et des témoins.

La coalition internationale a bombardé la ville de Sourmane, située à 70 km à l'ouest de Tripoli, ont rapporté les médias officiels libyens, qui citent un responsable militaire. Des objectifs civils et militaires auraient été pris pour cibles, rapporte de son côté l'agence de presse libyenne Jana.

Les Tornado GR4 de l'aviation britannique ont poursuivi également leurs sorties au-dessus de la Libye. «Au cours de ces missions, 22 chars, véhicules blindés et batteries d'artillerie ont été touchés à proximité d'Ajdabiya et Misrata», a indiqué un porte-parole de l'armée.

Blood and Oil?

German Minister Hints at Libya Mission Hypocrisy

Are countries involved in the international operation in Libya hypocritical? That, it would seem, is the belief of German Development Minister Dirk Niebel, who criticized participants for continuing to draw oil from Libya. The comments show just how wide the gap between Berlin and its NATO allies has become.

First, it was comments from Economics Minister Rainer Brüderle that raised eyebrows. Chancellor Angela Merkel's decision to shut down seven of Germany's oldest nuclear reactors in the wake of the Fukushima disaster, he said according to Thursday media reports, [was mere political calculation](#) ahead of a trio of important state elections.

On Thursday evening, it was the turn of Dirk Niebel -- like Brüderle, a member of Merkel's junior coalition partners, the Free Democrats (FDP). Appearing on a public television talkshow, Niebel accused the United Nations-backed military alliance currently operating in Libya of hypocrisy.

"It is notable that exactly those countries which are blithely dropping bombs in Libya are still drawing oil from Libya," he said.

Niebel also said that Germany was "not consulted" by France prior to the start of the campaign in Libya and added that European Union foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton's coordination of the EU position on Libya had been "suboptimal."

Niebel's comments came on the heels of a demand by Merkel, made during the ongoing European Union summit in Brussels, for a complete oil embargo against Libya. The international community, she said, "must clearly show that we will not do business with anyone who wages war against his own people."

Gap Between Germany and NATO Allies

But the statement by her development minister is one of the clearest indications yet of [the gap](#) between Germany's view of operations in North Africa and those of Berlin's NATO and European allies. And the implied accusation that oil interests are one motivation behind the Libya mission is not likely to be well received in Western capitals.

Merkel's government has been [widely criticized](#) for abstaining from last Friday's UN Security Council vote which authorized military operations in Libya to protect civilians under attack from forces loyal to Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi. Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, head of the FDP, has offered several [justifications for the abstention](#), ranging from concerns that Western operations could likewise harm civilians to worries that the Arab League was not supportive of the offensive. In a contribution for the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on Thursday, he wrote about the "risk of escalation."

On Thursday night, Niebel said that the German abstention was correct "because not all non-military possibilities had been exhausted." He also insisted that the move was not politically motivated, ahead of two important state votes in Germany this Sunday.

Westerwelle, however, has been careful not to criticize those countries which have elected to participate in operations in Libya. "We understand those who have, out of honorable motives, opted in favor of an international military

intervention in Libya," he has said several times in the last week. Westerwelle also said in a post-resolution [interview with SPIEGEL](#) that "Gadhafi must go, there's no question."

Unanimous Approval

Furthermore, Germany has [agreed to send AWACS surveillance planes](#) to Afghanistan, along with 300 crew, as a way of freeing up NATO capacity for the operations in Libya. On Friday, German parliament approved the deal by a vote of 407 to 113 with 32 abstentions.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, an agreement was reached among NATO member states that the trans-Atlantic alliance would take control of the no-fly zone over Libya. The decision came after days of disagreement, with the US eager to hand over control of the mission to NATO but Turkey and France skeptical of the model. The deal reached on Friday would reportedly not preclude France from bombing Libyan military targets independently of NATO.

The decision was approved by all 28 NATO governments -- including Dirk Niebel's Germany.

cgh -- with wire reports

Le mandat de l'ONU, ni plus ni moins

Le Monde | 23.03.11 | 13h51 • Mis à jour le 23.03.11 | 17h50

Les doutes et les critiques se font déjà entendre : une guerre pour le pétrole, une cynique démonstration de force contre un dictateur qui n'est pas pire que d'autres... C'est l'"hubris", nous explique-t-on, qui mènerait l'Occident en Libye contre le colonel Kadhafi.

Plus hexagonale encore, est, à peine formulée, cette insinuation : les armes parleraient au-dessus des sables de la Tripolitaine pour de stricts calculs de politique intérieure ; pour brandir bonne conscience et faire meilleure image à l'aube d'une campagne électorale...

Une guerre, en somme, qui ne charrierait que des appétits de puissance à bon compte, une revanche contre un trublion de la scène internationale, que nous avons longtemps fréquenté, mais dont les accoutrements et les poses provocatrices ont fini par lasser. En résumé, le spectacle serait celui de "l'Occident" dans ses oeuvres les plus basses : attaque sélective contre un autocrate aux petits pieds, assis, qui plus est, sur de conséquentes réserves d'hydrocarbures.

Arrêtons là. Regardons les faits. La Libye représente 2 % des approvisionnements mondiaux de pétrole, 5 % des fournitures des pays de l'OCDE et, s'agissant de la France, 15 % de nos achats de brut. Le butin, s'il y en a un, est tout relatif. L'essentiel est ailleurs. Et il faut le redire.

La campagne de Libye - les frappes aériennes qui s'y déroulent depuis le 19 mars - est la concrétisation d'une doctrine d'intervention humanitaire unanimement adoptée par l'ONU en 2005. Pour la première fois, la "*responsabilité de protéger*" des populations civiles prises pour cible par un pouvoir prêt à tout est brandie non pas seulement par les habituels "droits-de-l'hommes", mais par le sommet de la gouvernance mondiale, le Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies.

L'exigence de protéger des vies humaines a été défendue et inscrite dans un texte auquel aucune des grandes puissances n'a mis son veto : la résolution 1973, adoptée le 17 mars. Elle fonde l'action de la coalition internationale en Libye. On peut regretter que cette doctrine n'ait pas été sollicitée ailleurs - au Congo, par exemple. Est-ce une raison pour la caricaturer ?

Le texte est clair : des actions militaires pour protéger des civils. Les premiers résultats sont là, puisque la ville de Benghazi a été épargnée. L'aviation et l'artillerie lourde de Kadhafi sont frappées parce qu'elles menacent des populations qui se sont soulevées pacifiquement, avant de prendre les armes.

Le mandat de l'ONU exclut formellement toute intervention étrangère au sol. Il n'évoque à aucun moment un changement de régime. Il ne dit rien du maintien au pouvoir, ou non, du colonel Kadhafi. La résolution appelle à un cessez-le-feu - un vrai. Le reste, la bataille politique, c'est l'affaire des Libyens.

L'unité, déjà fragile, obtenue à l'ONU est à ce prix. Le mandat international doit être respecté à la lettre, sans extravagances verbales ni appels guerriers au renversement de régime. Le mandat, rien que le mandat, voilà la règle.

The World From Berlin

'Can Germans Trust Merkel's About-Face on Nuclear Power?'

Chancellor Angela Merkel says she has changed her mind about nuclear power following the Fukushima accident, and now intends to speed up plans to close down Germany's 17 reactors. Media commentators say she has no option but to turn her back on nuclear power. But how credible is her about-face?

Chancellor Angela Merkel has responded to her party's [stinging election defeat](#) on Sunday by pledging to speed up Germany's exit from nuclear power.

"My view of nuclear energy has been changed by the events in Japan," she said on Monday after a meeting of her Christian Democratic Union party to discuss the loss of the state of Baden-Württemberg, a CDU stronghold for 58 years, to the [resurgent Green Party](#). "I have learned a lesson from what happened in Japan."

The Greens, vehement opponents of nuclear power, surged in the rich southwestern state on a wave of public fear of nuclear power following the Fukushima accident. The party will rule the state in a coalition with the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD).

In effect, nuclear power has lost all political support in Germany because all parties know they are doomed to haemorrhage voters if they go on backing it.

"In view of the incident in Japan and the shape of things in Fukushima we simply cannot go back to business as usual," said Merkel. Many conservatives in her party still want to extend the lifetimes of nuclear reactors in Germany, but Merkel urged them to think again.

"It would be good for our party to draw new conclusions from the new events," she said. "Japan is a dramatic experience and we can't just ignore that."

Merkel's U-turn on nuclear power is an attempt to take the wind out of the Greens' sails. She called on Monday for a new energy plan for Germany, involving the phase-out of nuclear power, the expansion of renewables and improved energy efficiency. She said the government will present a concept in June for an exit from nuclear power.

Within days of the Fukushima accident, Merkel had ordered the shutdown of the seven oldest of Germany's 17 nuclear power stations pending a three-month safety review. She also put on hold her controversial plan to extend the lifetimes of the reactors by an average of 12 years past the 2021 phase-out date set by the previous center-left government.

Media commentators say Merkel has no option but to go green given the public mood, and that she will need to start wooing the Greens as a possible junior coalition ally ahead of the next general election in 2013.

Her current coalition partner, the pro-business Free Democratic Party (FDP) of Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, suffered disastrous losses in Baden-Württemberg and in another election on the same day, in the western state of Rhineland-Palatinate.

Editorial writers say Merkel now faces a battle with the pro-business wing of her party and with the top power companies that would face major losses as a result of an early nuclear pullout. German electrical utility companies

that own the country's nuclear power plants are expected to take legal action against the government's decision in April. Business leaders are warning that Europe's largest economy will face sharp hikes in energy prices if it pulls the plug on its nuclear plants, which currently account for almost 23 percent of the country's power production.

Media commentators also say that Merkel's own credibility is on the line. Is she just going green to stay in power, or does she really mean it?

The left-wing **Berliner Zeitung** writes:

"If Merkel is serious about getting out of nuclear power as quickly as possible, she will have to take on the managements of (German electricity utilities) E.on, EnBW, Vattenfall and RWE. They are appalled at the chancellor who has suddenly turned so totally unreliable."

"The anti-nuclear movement has arrived in the center of society, even among conservatives, and helped drive the Greens to victory. Given the disastrous election results, the government won't return to its old nuclear policy."

"If voters flock to the Greens, Angela Merkel will sooner or later have to go green herself. The fact that the conservative leader just a few months ago was dismissing possible coalitions with the Greens as a 'pipe dream' seems ridiculous and politically naive today."

"She will soon start thinking and speaking differently on this subject. Or maybe she will just speak differently -- that shows Merkel's biggest problem: citizens and voters are asking whether they can still believe her."

The center-left **Süddeutsche Zeitung** writes:

"In a remarkable moment, Angela Merkel explained how her attitude towards nuclear energy had changed. Her sentences came late, too late -- not just because of the lost elections."

"Merkel won't opt for an early general election, as her predecessor Gerhard Schröder did in a similar situation in 2005. She will go on governing to the bitter end because she's someone who sticks things out. It's very likely that this coalition will continue to erode. It faces a Bundesrat (*editor's note -- upper house of parliament*) dominated by opposition parties. The center-right coalition will have to make even more compromises and will lose more of its supporters as a result. The CDU will be shaken but will survive. The FDP's prospects are worse."

The conservative **Die Welt** writes:

"Angela Merkel will now increasingly focus on her previous themes of family policy, infrastructure and integration -- issues with which she can pull middle-class voters away from the Greens. A Green governor of a heavily industrial state -- that also means that a Green must tell the Greens that electricity doesn't automatically come from elsewhere if approval is withheld not just from nuclear reactors but also from new power lines that will carry electricity from the future wind parks down to southern Germany. Ten years ago during the Kosovo war, the Greens had to undergo a painful correction of their esoteric relationship with foreign policy. Now they face reality check Number Two: domestic politics isn't a field of dreams either."

"From Merkel's point of view it can't hurt to try and get close to its new big rival party but also to make tough demands on it when it comes to learning how to deal with practical domestic politics."

The conservative **Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung** writes:

"At the moment all Merkel can do is hope and try to stabilize her coalition with her ailing partner. If even Westerwelle says he has understood that the elections were a vote on nuclear power, then the conservatives will have understood it too."

"Their pro-business wing will oppose the reversal of the extension of nuclear plant lifetimes, and it will have justifiable arguments for doing so. But even the CDU won't be able to keep on opposing the majority view of the people that has emerged and hardened in debate stretching over decades. The move out of nuclear power will also close the biggest rift with the Greens."

"On immigration and integration, the conservatives and Greens are already closer than either party would care to admit. The same is true of foreign policy. But there are still plenty of issues that divide them, not just education. The conservatives will have to explain to their unsettled voters what they still stand for -- and who in the CDU still represents conservative values. That will require an emphasis on what distinguishes it from the SPD and the Greens."

-- *David Crossland*

Editorial-Opinion

Mr. Obama speaks on Libya

29 mars 2011

[The Washington Post](#)

Anglais

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BY THE TIME President Obama addressed the country about Libya Monday evening, the mission was nine days old - and he could point to some clear successes. The United States, he said, "has worked with our international partners to mobilize a broad coalition, secure an international mandate to protect civilians, stop an advancing army, prevent a massacre and establish a no-fly zone." In fact, there's little doubt that the first allied airstrikes stopped an assault on the rebel-held city of Benghazi by the forces of Moammar Gaddafi that could have killed thousands. Mr. Obama was right to act, and he deserves the credit that he claimed.

The problem is that the war in Libya is far from over, even if the administration is handing command off to the NATO alliance. Mr. Obama said "the United States will play a supporting role" from now on, and "the risk and cost of the operation . . . will be reduced significantly." But he also recognized that unless Mr. Gaddafi is removed from power, "Libya will remain dangerous." The humanitarian rescue that the president celebrated will be tenuous - and American forces may be needed again.

For now, a change of regime does not look near. While rebel forces have made encouraging advances in recent days, it's not clear they are capable of a military victory without direct support from NATO. Such backup is not allowed by the U.N. resolution that authorized the intervention, and Mr. Obama reiterated that he would not support it: "Broadening our military mission to include regime change," he said, "would be a mistake."

Mr. Obama said he would "actively pursue" Mr. Gaddafi's downfall "through non-military means." But his elaboration of that strategy was less than satisfying. While pointing to the financial sanctions and arms embargo applied to the regime by the United Nations, he didn't endorse other measures, favored by France, that might speed an opposition victory: supplies of weapons or training for the rebel army, for example.

The president repeated calls for those around Mr. Gaddafi to turn against him. The administration appears to hope that the regime will crumble from within. "With the time and space that we have provided for the Libyan people, they will be able to determine their own destiny," Mr. Obama declared. But how?

What was missing from Mr. Obama's address was a strategy that doesn't rely on good fortune - a sudden coup, an unexpected rebel advance, or an unlikely political deal for Mr. Gaddafi's departure. The president is not wrong to try to limit the costs and risks of intervention in Libya when U.S. forces are still deployed in two other Muslim countries and a fiscal crisis presses at home. But a policy that curtails American involvement at the expense of failing to resolve Libya's crisis may only lead to greater costs and dangers.

Mr. Obama concluded by broadly endorsing the uprisings across the Middle East and declaring that "this movement of change cannot be turned back" and that "we must stand alongside those who believe in the same core principles" of freedom and nonviolence. He is right to stake out that position, and to argue that the United States "can make a difference." U.S. intervention has helped make a difference in Libya; the danger is that the president's eagerness to circumscribe American involvement will ultimately thwart the change he endorsed.

Defending Strikes, Obama Says He 'Refused to Wait'

By HELENE COOPER

1521 mots

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Anglais

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WASHINGTON -- President Obama defended the American-led military assault in Libya on Monday, saying it was in the national interest of the United States to stop a potential massacre that would have "stained the conscience of the world."

In his first major address since ordering American airstrikes on the forces and artillery of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi nine days ago, Mr. Obama emphasized that the United States's role in the assault would be limited, but said that America had the responsibility and the international backing to stop what he characterized as a looming genocide in the Libyan city of Benghazi.

"I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action," Mr. Obama said.

At the same time, he said, directing American troops to forcibly remove Colonel Qaddafi from power would be a step too far, and would "splinter" the international coalition that has moved against the Libyan government.

"To be blunt, we went down that road in Iraq," Mr. Obama said, adding that "regime change there took eight years, thousands of American and Iraqi lives, and nearly a trillion dollars. That is not something we can afford to repeat in Libya."

Speaking in the early evening from the National Defense University in Washington, Mr. Obama said he had made good on his promise to limit American military involvement against Colonel Qaddafi's forces -- he did not use the word "war" to describe the action -- and he laid out a more general philosophy for the use of force.

But while Mr. Obama described a narrower role for the United States in a NATO-led operation in Libya, the American military has been carrying out an expansive and increasingly potent air campaign to compel the Libyan Army to turn against Colonel Qaddafi.

The president said he was willing to act unilaterally to defend the nation and its core interests. But in other cases, he said, when the safety of Americans is not directly threatened but where action can be justified -- in the case of genocide, humanitarian relief, regional security or economic interests -- the United States should not act alone. His statements amounted both to a rationale for multilateralism and another critique of what he has all along characterized as the excessively unilateral tendencies of the administration of George W. Bush.

"In such cases, we should not be afraid to act -- but the burden of action should not be America's alone," Mr. Obama said. "Because contrary to the claims of some, American leadership is not simply a matter of going it alone and bearing all of the burden ourselves. Real leadership creates the conditions and coalitions for others to step up as well; to work with allies and partners so that they bear their share of the burden and pay their share of the costs; and to see that the principles of justice and human dignity are upheld by all."

Mr. Obama never mentioned many of the other nations going through upheaval across the Arab world, including Yemen, Syria and Bahrain, but left little doubt that his decision to send the United States military into action in Libya was the product of a confluence of particular circumstances and opportunities.

He did not say how the intervention in Libya would end, but said the United States and its allies would seek to drive Colonel Qaddafi from power by means other than military force if necessary.

Speaking for 28 minutes, Mr. Obama addressed a number of audiences. To the American public, he tried to offer reassurance that the United States was not getting involved in another open-ended commitment in a place that few Americans had spent much time thinking about. To the democracy protesters across the Middle East, he vowed that the United States would stand by them, even as he said that "progress will be uneven, and change will come differently in different countries," a partial acknowledgment that complex relations between the United States and different Arab countries may make for different American responses in different countries.

"The United States will not be able to dictate the pace and scope of this change," Mr. Obama said. But, he added, "I believe that this movement of change cannot be turned back, and that we must stand alongside those who believe in the same core principles that have guided us through many storms: our opposition to violence directed against one's own citizens; our support for a set of universal rights, including the freedom for people to express themselves and choose their leaders; our support for governments that are ultimately responsive to the aspirations of the people."

The president's remarks were timed to coincide with the formal handover of control over the Libya campaign to NATO, scheduled for Wednesday. But in the wake of criticism from Congressional representatives from both sides of the aisle that Mr. Obama overstepped his authority in ordering the strikes without first getting Congressional approval -- and the return of lawmakers to Washington after their spring recess -- Mr. Obama had another audience: Congress.

Mr. Obama said that he authorized the military action only "after consulting the bipartisan leadership of Congress," which White House officials have maintained is sufficient for what they have described as a limited military campaign.

Whether his comments will do much to calm the criticism on Capitol Hill remains unclear. Some liberals remain unsettled by the fact of another war in a Muslim country, initiated by a Democratic president who first came to national prominence as an opponent of the Iraq war, even as others backed the use of force to avert a potential massacre.

Some Republicans continued to criticize Mr. Obama for moving too slowly, while another strain of conservative thought argued that the intervention was overreach, a military action without a compelling national interest.

"Since the allied military campaign began in Libya, President Obama's seeming uncertainty about the parameters and details of our engagement has only inspired a similar uncertainty among the American people," Representative Tom Price, Republican of Georgia, said in a statement after the speech. "The president's speech this evening offered very little to diminish those concerns."

From the start, Mr. Obama has been caught between criticism that he did not do enough and that he had done too much. He continued to try to explain some seeming contradictions on Monday evening, including that while the United States wants Colonel Qaddafi out, it would not make his departure a goal of the military action.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, he said, will attend a meeting in London on Tuesday where the international community will try to come up with a separate plan to pressure Colonel Qaddafi to leave.

"I know that some Americans continue to have questions about our efforts in Libya," Mr. Obama acknowledged. "Qaddafi has not yet stepped down from power, and until he does, Libya will remain dangerous."

But, he said, "if we try to overthrow Qaddafi by force, our coalition would splinter. We would likely have to put U.S. troops on the ground, or risk killing many civilians from the air. The dangers to our men and women in uniform would be far greater. So would the costs and our share of the responsibility for what comes next."

Aaron David Miller, a State Department Middle East peace negotiator during the Clinton administration, said Mr. Obama described a doctrine that, in essence, can be boiled to this: "If we can, if there's a moral case, if we have allies, and if we can transition out and not get stuck, we'll move to help. The Obama doctrine is the 'hedge your bets and make sure you have a way out' doctrine. He learned from Afghanistan and Iraq."

White House officials said the American strikes in Libya did not set a precedent for military action in other Middle East trouble spots. "Obviously there are certain aspirations that are being voiced by each of these movements, but there's no question that each of them is unique," Deputy National Security Adviser Denis McDonough said on Monday. "We don't get very hung up on this question of precedent."

But the question of precedent is one that Mr. Obama is clearly still grappling with. "My fellow Americans, I know that at a time of upheaval overseas -- when the news is filled with conflict and change -- it can be tempting to turn away from the world," he said.

But, his conclusion was ambiguous at best: "Let us look to the future with confidence and hope not only for our own country, but for all those yearning for freedom around the world."

PHOTOS: President Obama at the National Defense University in Washington during his televised address on Monday night. (A1); President Obama after his remarks at the National Defense University in Washington, where he spoke on television about the military operation in Libya.; Listening, from left, were Adm. Mike Mullen, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13)

Editorial: President Obama on Libya

President Obama made the right, albeit belated, decision to join with allies and try to stop Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi from slaughtering thousands of Libyans. But he has been far too slow to explain that decision, or his long-term strategy, to Congress and the American people.

On Monday night, the president spoke to the nation and made a strong case for why America needed to intervene in this fight — and why that did not always mean it should intervene in others.

Mr. Obama said that the United States had a moral responsibility to stop “violence on a horrific scale,” as well as a unique international mandate and a broad coalition to act with. He said that failure to intervene could also have threatened the peaceful transitions in Egypt and Tunisia, as thousands of Libyan refugees poured across their borders, while other dictators would conclude that “violence is the best strategy to cling to power.”

Mr. Obama could report encouraging early progress on the military and diplomatic fronts. Washington and its allies have crippled or destroyed Colonel Qaddafi’s anti-aircraft defenses, peeled his troops back from the city of Benghazi — saving potentially thousands of lives — and allowed rebel forces to retake the offensive.

Just as encouragingly, this military effort that was galvanized internationally — the United Nations Security Council authorized “all necessary measures” to protect civilians in Libya — will soon be run internationally. Last weekend, the United States handed over responsibility for enforcing the no-flight zone to NATO. And the alliance is now preparing to take command of the entire mission, with the support of (still too few) Arab nations.

To his credit, Mr. Obama did not sugarcoat the difficulties ahead. While he suggested that his goal, ultimately, is to see Colonel Qaddafi gone, he also said that the air war was unlikely to accomplish that by itself.

Most important, he vowed that there would be no American ground troops in this fight. “If we tried to overthrow Qaddafi by force,” he said, “our coalition would splinter.” He said “regime change” in Iraq took eight years and cost thousands of American and Iraqi lives. “That is not something we can afford to repeat in Libya.”

Instead, he said the United States and its allies would work to increase the diplomatic and military pressure on Colonel Qaddafi and his cronies. A meeting on Tuesday with allies and members of the Libyan opposition is supposed to develop that strategy along with ways to help the rebels build alternate, and we hope humane and competent, governing structures. That needs to start quickly.

To hold their ground and protect endangered civilians, let alone advance, the rebels will likely need air support for quite some time. Mr. Obama was right not to promise a swift end to the air campaign. At the same time, he should not overestimate the patience of the American people or the weariness of the overstretched military.

And as Washington reduces its military role, others, inside and outside NATO, will need to increase theirs. Within NATO, unenthusiastic partners like Germany and Turkey need to at least stay out of the way even if they continue to stand aside from the fighting.

The president made the right choice to act, but this is a war of choice, not necessity. Presidents should not commit the military to battle without consulting Congress and explaining their reasons to the American people.

Fortunately, initial coalition military operations have gone well. Unfortunately, it is the nature of war that they will not always go well. Mr. Obama needs to work with Congress and keep the public fully informed. On Monday, he made an overdue start on that.

“This house believes that the West should keep out of the Arab world's revolutions”.

The proposer's rebuttal remarks

Mar 28th 2011 | [As'ad AbuKhalil](#) 

I will resist the temptation to comment on one of the many typical Western clichés about the Middle East—this one in his piece about the "genie in the bottle"—and address the major points Sir Menzies Campbell raised. There is more than a tinge of colonial mentality in his argument and even language: he wants Western governments to "nurture democracy and to exercise a benign influence". This is the same argument made by colonial powers after the first world war either to deny independence to certain countries, or to accord them "mandate" systems—presumably to nurture their political development. Mr Campbell sees a great opportunity for the West, but he does not explain why the opportunity has just risen. America and Britain have been sponsoring and arming the bulk of Middle East dictatorships for decades, and that close relationship would have been the great opportunity for those seeking the democratisation of the Middle East. Instead of democratisation, the Middle East got the Yamama arms deal, two major wars in Iraq, and unconditional Western support for Israeli wars and invasions.

Mr Campbell tries to make the argument that it is in the pragmatic interest of Western countries to lead the Arab countries by the hand, so to speak, towards democracy. But the West missed one opportunity after another, and Western governments still stand firmly in support of the Saudi tyranny. Arabs are rightly suspicious of Western motives, and they get more suspicious when Western promises of democracy are accompanied by bombs on Arab heads. Arabs legitimately ask where those Western humanitarian concerns are when Palestinian civilians are killed (as has happened this week). Will the West order a no-fly zone over Gaza, ask many Palestinians? Mr Campbell also needs to explain why a "humanitarian" bombing mission is necessary in Libya, but not in Bahrain, where the royal family still enjoys Western support and sponsorship.

He then makes urgent pleas for support for democracy in Libya. Indeed, the Libyan people have suffered for too long from a brutal and savage dictator who suffers from an acute case of ideological self-worship. But one wonders: did America, France, Britain and Italy not know that Muammar Qaddafi was a bloody dictator when they rehabilitated him (and even began to arm him) after 2003? Did the British government not know that civilians were killed in Pan Am Flight 103 when they arranged for the release of one of Colonel Qaddafi's bomb plotters? This sudden feigning of outrage at his dictatorship smacks of opportunism, at best.

But Mr Campbell wishes to legitimise Western bombing of targets in Libya by invoking the authority of the Arab League and the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC). Here, without noticing, he contradicts himself. To justify a mission that he says aims at furthering democracy in Libya, he refers to the support that the mission enjoys from the very tyrannical governments that Arabs have been trying to overthrow. The Arab League? That empty body that was established first by the British colonial power to bring together its Arab clients, and was then run for decades by Husni Mubarak on behalf of the Arab tyrannical order? Or the GCC? A body that is run by Saudi Arabia on behalf of American and Western economic, military and political interests? Mr Campbell on the one hand pleads for democracy for the Arabs, and then on the other hand offends them by claiming that their dictators speak for them. He should do some research and he will discover that the Arab regimes that Britain and America so

love to arm do not speak for the Arabs, and are in fact despised by the Arab people.

Mr Campbell also needs to explain why only the Libyan uprising needs support. Why not the other uprisings in Yemen, Syria, Bahrain and Oman? And why, after preaching to Arabs that they can only protest peacefully, have Western governments chosen to support the one Arab uprising that is armed (although the Libyan rebels have the right to defend themselves against Colonel Qaddafi's brutal repression)? It is likely that Mr Mubarak killed as many of his people as has Colonel Qaddafi during the uprising. Yet Mr Mubarak enjoyed Western support to his last day in office, and the spokesperson of the US Department of State even attacked the peaceful protesters in Egypt. That was when Barack Obama was urging "reform" in Egypt—and reform is nothing but a euphemism for prolonging the lives of Arab dictators.

Mr Campbell then concludes by admitting that Western governments are selective and that being selective is better. But how is the selection done? We need to know. He should have an answer to his question as to why the West should butt out. It is simple: the horrific behaviour of Western countries in the contemporary history of the Middle East has deservedly earned them only the ill will of the bulk of the population. Western governments should stay out of the region because they are not wanted.

Atomausstieg konkret

Wenn Deutschland die Atomkraft aufgibt, müssen alle Meiler abgebaut werden. Bis die erste Phase des eigentlichen Rückbaus beginnt, haben unendlich viele Gutachter besichtigt, gemessen, gerechnet, geplant. Das dauert - und kostet viele Milliarden.

Von Inge Kloepfer



29. März 2011

„Es war der krönende Abschluss“, sagt Peter Klimmek nachdenklich. Er meint den Moment vor einem Jahr, als aus dem Kernkraftwerk Würgassen der letzte Teil des Reaktors abtransportiert wurde. „Das war ein historischer Tag“, sagt der Elektrotechniker. Aber große Freude schwingt in seiner Stimme nicht mit. Klimmek kennt das Kraftwerk in Ostwestfalen seit Jahrzehnten. Sein gesamtes Berufsleben ist mit der Geschichte des AKW Würgassen verbunden. Als er 1975 dort seine Arbeit aufnahm, war das Kraftwerk erst vier Jahre am Netz. Jetzt muss Klimmek als Kommunikationschef der Welt erklären, wie das AKW abgebaut wird. In vier Jahren wird alles vorbei sein.

Wie in Würgassen könnte es demnächst auch in Biblis oder Neckarwestheim zugehen: Atomkraftwerke werden rückgebaut. Derzeit befinden sich in Deutschland 16 Kernkraftwerke in Stilllegung, drei sind schon ganz zurückgebaut. Dazu kommen etliche abgebaute Forschungsreaktoren. Doch der Rückbau großer Reaktoren ist noch kein Standardgeschäft in Deutschland, sondern ein Jahre währendes Hin und Her zwischen Betreibern und Behörden, Genehmigungen und Freigaben. Jedes Werk braucht ein eigenes Konzept. Es gibt zwar viel Einzelwissen, aber keine Blaupause. Entsprechend unsicher ist die Planung über Zeit und Kosten.

Buchstäblich aus dem Leben gerissen



Transport

Wesentlich höher sind die Kosten beim Rückbau des Kernkraftwerks in Greifswald-Lubmin. Gegner protestieren dort gegen den Castor-

Transport

In Würgassen war es ein Haarriss im Kernmantel im Inneren des Reaktors, der dem ersten rein kommerziellen Atomkraftwerk der Bundesrepublik den Garaus machte. Nicht etwa, weil der Riss irreparabel gewesen wäre, sondern weil Um- und Nachrüstungsmaßnahmen seine Wirtschaftlichkeit in Frage stellten. Aus und vorbei: Am 26. August 1994 wurde der Siedewasser-Reaktor der ersten Generation abgeschaltet und damit buchstäblich aus dem Leben gerissen. Es war ja noch voll funktionsfähig. Das ist bei Stilllegungen immer so, weil man Atomkraftwerke eben nicht auf Verschleiß fahren kann.

Als erstes wird stillgelegten und für den Rückbau vorgesehenen Kraftwerken das Herz herausgeschnitten. So auch in Würgassen: Die hochradioaktiven Brennelemente wurden in die Wiederaufbereitungsanlage La Hague verfrachtet, wodurch sich das Inventar an Radioaktivität auf ein Hundertstel im Vergleich zum Leistungsbetrieb reduzierte. Allein das ist Schwerstarbeit. Und was danach kommt erst recht.

Einen Kraftwerksrückbau erledigen die Betreiber nicht allein, sondern mit Hilfe von hochspezialisierten Fremdfirmen: Da reisen Strahlenschutzfachkräfte an, Beton- und Metallbauunternehmen, Transportfirmen. „Über all die Jahre haben in Würgassen zwischen 300 und 600 solcher Fachleute gleichzeitig am Rückbau gearbeitet“, erzählt Klimmek.

Gemessen, gerechnet, geplant

Bis die erste Phase des eigentlichen Rückbaus beginnt, haben unendlich viele Gutachter besichtigt, gemessen, gerechnet, geplant. Dann werden erst einmal Anlagenteile zerlegt, die nicht mehr benötigt werden, zu Anfang alles noch außerhalb des Sicherheitsbehälters. Oberflächlich kontaminierte Bestandteile werden gereinigt – durch Bürsten, Schrubben, Schleifen, mit Sandstrahl, Säuren oder elektrischen Verfahren. Jede Betonplatte, jedes Rohr, jede Schraube. Man arbeitet sich von außen nach innen. Hochradioaktive Teile werden ferngesteuert unter Wasser zerteilt. Und immer wieder wird die Strahlung gemessen, bis das Material aus dem Inneren des Kernkraftwerks als ganz normaler Schrott den Ort verlassen kann. Das Kühlwasser wird gefiltert und verdampft, der kontaminierte Schlamm gelagert. „Nur etwa ein Prozent des gesamten Materials bleiben als radioaktiver Müll“, sagt Klimmek. „Bei uns sind das 5000 Tonnen.“

Bis das Atomkraftwerk Würgassen zum Abriss freigegeben ist, wird es 2014 werden. Die zeitliche Bilanz sieht dann so aus: Vier Jahre gebaut, 22 Jahre gelaufen, 2 Jahre stillgelegt, 18 Jahre zurückgebaut. Das ist relativ lange, weil man mit dem Rückbau der alten Meiler noch nicht viel Erfahrung hatte. Zukünftig wird mit 10 bis 12 Jahren gerechnet. Wie lange es dauert, bis man alle Kernkraftwerke in Deutschland abgeschaltet und abgebaut hat, bleibt trotzdem eine Rechnung über den Daumen. Zu viele Unbekannte kommen hier ins Spiel. Enge Grenzen setzt schon der Arbeitsmarkt: Auf Rückbau spezialisierte Fachkräfte sind rar. Aber auch beim Rückbau selbst gibt es Überraschungen. So können Hotspots auftauchen, kontaminierte Stellen, mit denen niemand gerechnet hat. In Greifswald, wo fünf Reaktorblöcke aus DDR-Zeiten verschwinden sollen, laborieren die Fachleute schon ewig wegen solcher Hotspots. Aber es handelt sich auch um eines der größten Stilllegungsprojekte weltweit.

„Frühestens 2055 könnte alles vorbei sein“

Der Chemiker Gerhard Schmidt vom Öko-Institut, der sich seit Jahren mit dem Rückbau von Kernkraftwerken beschäftigt, beginnt zu rechnen. „Wenn der letzte Meiler im Jahr 2040 vom Netz ginge“, sagt er, „dann könnte frühestens im Jahr 2055 alles vorbei sein.“ Das heißt: Von den Werken gäbe es keine Spur mehr. Oder besser gesagt, keine sichtbaren Spuren. Denn Spuren werden bleiben, der kontaminierte Müll eben.

Schmidt rechnet weiter: „Wenn wir – im günstigsten Fall – davon ausgehen, dass es 2030 endlich zur Betriebseröffnung eines Endlagers käme, dann dauert der Einlagerungsbetrieb des bis dann angefallenen Mülls sicher noch einmal 40 Jahre.“ Behälter für Behälter muss vorsichtig Hunderte von Metern unter die Erde gebracht werden. Also würde es 2070 – frühestens.

Müll wird es bis zum Abbau des letzten Werkes reichlich geben: Rund 290.000 Kubikmeter schwach- und mittelaktive Abfälle, schätzt das Bundesumweltministerium in Berlin. Dazu kämen bis zu 40.000 Kubikmeter hochaktiver Müll, wie Brennelemente. Das alles müsste aus den vielen Zwischenlagern unter die Erde, wo jetzt erst etwa 84.000 Kubikmeter lagern. Sind die Schächte verschlossen, wäre die Atomkraft in Deutschland endgültig Geschichte.

So bleibt die Frage nach den Kosten. „Wir werden bei einer Milliarde Euro landen“, sagt Elektrotechniker Klimmek in Würgassen. Mit 300 Millionen Euro weniger hatte man geplant. Ein Teil der Planungsungenauigkeiten ist der fehlenden Erfahrung geschuldet.

Sie rechnen über den Daumen

Wesentlich höher sind die Kosten beim Rückbau der ehemals ostdeutschen Kernkraftwerke in Greifswald-Lubmin und Rheinsberg, die der Staat und damit der Steuerzahler trägt. Hier sprengt der Mehraufwand die Milliardengrenze; die Energiewerke Nord geben die Gesamtkosten mit 4,1 Milliarden Euro an. Deshalb wagen viele Experten es nicht mehr, Kosten genau zu beziffern. Sie rechnen über den Daumen.

Der Rückbau eines Meilers koste so viel wie seine Errichtung, heißt es. Andere Experten veranschlagen rund eine Milliarde Euro je Werk – im Durchschnitt. Die Energiekonzerne haben dafür fast 29 Milliarden Euro zurückgestellt, allen voran Eon mit 12,2 Milliarden Euro, dicht gefolgt von RWE.

Nimmt man alle noch stehenden Anlagen zusammen, wären für den Rückbau im sehr günstigen Fall zwischen 40 und 60 Milliarden Euro aufzubringen, davon der größere Teil von der Energiewirtschaft selbst. Dazu kommen die Kosten der Endlagerung, die der Wissenschaftler

Schmidt vom Öko-Institut bei einer oberen Preisspanne mit 15 Milliarden Euro ansetzt – für den hochradioaktiven Müll. „Wenn wir allerdings keine gesellschaftliche Einigung in dieser Frage erreichen, dann kommen noch fünf Milliarden dazu.“

Wieder geht es hier um ganz grobe Schätzungen. „Bei Schacht Konrad, wo der schwach radioaktive Abfall langfristig lagern soll, wird es mit fünf Milliarden nicht ganz so teuer“, meint er auch. Wenn der Rückbau-Experte einen Strich unter das alles zieht, hätten sich die Kosten auf rund 70 Milliarden Euro summiert, bis alles weg und der Müll sicher unter der Erde ist. „Wenn ich diesen Betrag auf die Kilowattstunden umlege, die die Anlagen produziert haben, dann ist das verschwindend wenig.“

Weniger Stolz, eher Wehmut

Bei Schmidts geschätzten 70 Milliarden Euro fehlen aber die Opportunitätskosten, also alles, was Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft an Einnahmen durch den Ausstieg entgeht. Nicht nur hätte die Laufzeitenverlängerung dem Steuerzahler 2,3 Milliarden Euro je Jahr eingebracht, auch hätte die Atomwirtschaft einen Fonds für erneuerbare Energien finanzieren müssen. Volkswirtschaftlich drohen noch viel höhere Verluste: In der Energieprognose 2009 für die Bundesregierung hieß es, dass das Bruttoinlandsprodukt bei einer Laufzeitverlängerung von acht Jahren 2020 um 0,6 und 2030 um 0,9 Prozent höher wäre. Über die Jahre aufaddiert entspräche das einem Betrag von weit über 100 Milliarden Euro.

Man könnte noch vieles hinzu- und etliches gegenrechnen. Die noch verbliebenen 80 Mitarbeiter in Würgassen müssen sich darüber aber keine Gedanken machen. Sie werden 2015 ihren Job erledigt haben. Von ehemals 350 Mitarbeitern am Standort werden sich dann nur noch eine Handvoll Menschen um das kleine Zwischenlager des Kraftwerks kümmern, bis irgendwann alles in Schacht Konrad verschwindet. Peter Klimmek wird man zu der Zeit – vierzig Jahre nach seinem Einstieg – nicht mehr antreffen. Ein wenig seltsam ist ihm schon zumute. „Wir arbeiten hart, um am Ende vor dem Nichts zu stehen.“ Das bezieht er nicht auf sich selbst, sondern auf das Werk und die Tatsache, dass alles, was mal strahlte, brannte, kochte und Strom erzeugte, wieder weggeräumt ist. „Stolz stellt sich weniger ein, eher Wehmut“, sagt Klimmek. „Ein bisschen zumindest.“

Text: F.A.Z.

L'Europe, l'ONU et la Libye

Fondation Robert Schuman | 29.03.11 | 10h11 (in **Le Monde** 29/3)

La résolution 1973 de l'ONU est une victoire européenne.

Les valeurs universelles que porte l'Europe, Démocratie, état de droit, droits de l'Homme, ne peuvent s'accommoder de l'action de régimes qui survivent en massacrant leurs propres peuples.

A l'initiative de la France et du Royaume-Uni, l'appel de pays arabes à arrêter le bain de sang voulu par le régime libyen a convaincu, naturellement avec le ralliement américain, un Conseil de Sécurité audacieux, bien obligé de tenir compte de l'opinion mondiale. C'est une défaite de la froide raison d'Etat, qui guidait prétendument de manière inexorable et définitive les relations entre les nations. C'est l'émergence, désormais avérée, de la notion de Communauté internationale.

Qu'importe que l'Union européenne es-qualité n'ait pas parlé d'une seule voix en la matière! Elle n'est pas encore prête. Qu'on ne stigmatise pas non plus l'Allemagne de n'avoir pas été en première ligne pour utiliser la force au service du droit. Depuis la catastrophe du nazisme, les Allemands ne croient plus à la contrainte militaire et le leur reprocher est un procès imbécile et à courte vue.

Ce qui importe avant tout c'est que les principes européens à valeur universelle, qui figurent dans nos traités et guident nos institutions communes, soient de plus en plus partagés et puissent trouver une concrétisation juridique et matérielle au sein des instances internationales qui contribuent à dessiner le monde de demain.

Ce que nous avons fait entre nous sur le continent européen - arrêter les guerres, réconcilier les peuples, partager nos intérêts et apporter la prospérité - est possible aussi ailleurs.

Et même si la voie sur laquelle nous nous engageons ne sera pas semée de roses, que nous aurons à affronter d'autres combats pour la Démocratie, en Côte d'Ivoire, au Yemen ou ailleurs, elle honore l'Europe, ses principes, son droit et achève de convaincre, s'il en était besoin, qu'elle est loin d'être sur le déclin.

Pour lire d'autres contenus, rendez-vous sur le site de la [Fondation Robert Schuman](#)

Jean-Dominique Giuliani, président de la Fondation Robert Schuman

The ghost of Tony

26 mars 2011

[The Economist](#)

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Bagehot

David Cameron and Libya

David Cameron leads a sceptical nation to war

A MONTH ago, David Cameron shuttled from Egypt to Kuwait, Qatar and Oman to explain why—in his response to the spreading protests of the Arab spring—he would not be Tony Blair. He did not use quite those words. Instead, Britain's prime minister portrayed himself standing midway between two foolish extremes. On one side were the "naive neoconservatives" who thought that democracy could be dropped from a bomb bay at 40,000 feet (hello, Mr Blair). On the other, generations of suave Foreign Office types, murmuring that "Arabs or Muslims can't do democracy", and that stability is all.

Instead Mr Cameron announced an alternative, middle path. His government would not press for instant democracy everywhere, but would urge Arab leaders to grant basic rights—free speech, the right to free assembly and the rule of law—precisely because denying people such rights was a recipe for instability. At the time, Bagehot concluded that this strategy was not so much a diplomatic third way as a bet on events: a low-key version of neoconservatism, wagering that gradual reforms would bring more stability than despotism.

One month on, events in Libya have outrun the prime minister's cautious middle way. Mr Cameron's modest ambitions—standing up for the right of ordinary Arabs to voice their hopes and frustrations—find him transformed from pragmatist to war leader. To adapt the prime minister's own schema, he finds himself defending the most basic rights of Libyans, namely freedom from brutal repression and the right to self-determination, with bombs dropped from 40,000 feet.

So is Mr Cameron perforce adopting Mr Blair's doctrine of liberal interventionism? He insists not. "This is not another Iraq," he told Parliament on March 21st, in a six-hour debate filled with theatre designed to convey that point, from Mr Cameron's patience with backbench interventions to the sight of the attorney-general sitting at his side (government legal advice approving the Libya action was summarised for MPs in an official note). Mr Cameron pointedly calls the military action in Libya "necessary, legal and right". Yet that same neat tricolon captures something more complex than an outright rejection of the Blair doctrine. Parsed carefully, its three elements signify, in order: "not like Blair, definitely not like Blair—and a rather Blair-like argument for war".

If Britain lost a good deal of innocence in Iraq, that unhappy war has not eradicated the appeal of "doing the right thing" for the political class. Even after Iraq, pacifism does not occupy the moral high ground in British politics. Two broad reasons were cited as MPs endorsed military force against Muammar Qaddafi, by 557 to 13 votes. The first, which united the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition with most of the Labour Party, cast the use of military force as a response to a humanitarian emergency. America, France and Britain had been in a "race against time" to prevent a slaughter of civilians in Benghazi, Mr Cameron told Parliament. Supporting the government, the Labour leader of the opposition, Ed Miliband, drew comparisons with the Holocaust and the Spanish civil war, and spoke of an international "responsibility to protect", when crimes against humanity loom.

Yet the public, wearied by years of entanglement in Iraq and Afghanistan, seems queasiest about the Libya mission when it is cast in purely altruistic terms. A poll asking if British forces should risk death or injury to protect Libyan rebels from Colonel Qaddafi found 53% opposed. Unsurprisingly, Mr Cameron is keen to assure British voters this mission is not merely an outbreak of do-goodery, but also "hard-headed" (a favourite Cameron phrase), rooted in national interests, and limited in scope.

The prime minister duly offers a second, buttressing set of arguments for war, couched in national-interest terms. Were Mr Qaddafi left to kill, unchallenged, the international community's word would be exposed as hollow, his regime might return to exporting terrorism and waves of refugees, and hopes for the Arab spring risk being dashed. The prime minister's sincerity is proved by the political risks he has run, British sources argue. He has bound his fate to France's Nicolas Sarkozy, an alarmingly mercurial figure. What is more, when Mr Cameron decided to join the French drive for a UN Security Council resolution authorising military strikes, he didn't know "where the Americans were going with this", sources say. Remarkably, they add, Barack Obama's decision-making had been so opaque that when America tabled strong language extending the draft's scope, Britain half-feared a bid to wreck the resolution by attracting a veto.

Now it gets harder

The prime minister's contention is that the moral and pragmatic spurs to action are complementary. Alas, in Libya, a humanitarian approach and the cold-eyed pursuit of national interests might yet come to seem in tension. Asked how he thinks the Libyan mission will end, Mr Cameron can only offer a fudge. He told MPs that success will involve an end to attacks on civilians, at which point "the Libyan people must choose their own future".

Paradoxically, if this mission is essentially humanitarian, Britain's commitment really is limited, as Mr Cameron promises: do-gooders can always harden their hearts and walk away. In contrast, if Mr Cameron truly believes that Libyan instability directly threatens British interests, then his commitment will be guided by events on the ground, most of which Britain cannot control.

Stopping a massacre in Benghazi was the right thing to do. From now on, this gets harder. A thoughtful new Tory MP, Rory Stewart—a former soldier and diplomat, familiar with Iraq and Afghanistan—urged Mr Cameron to stick to modest, achievable goals and humble language. It was good advice. The opposite certainly did for Mr Blair.

The Libya Mission Was 'Never About Regime Change'

By Bret Stephens

28 mars 2011

[The Wall Street Journal](#)

Aboard the National Airborne Operations Center -- Robert Gates is a compact and unassuming man, but a U.S. secretary of defense does not travel in compact or unassuming ways. The National Airborne Operations Center, a.k.a. the "doomsday plane," is a giant, windowless fortress of an aircraft built during the Cold War and designed to survive a nuclear war. In just five days the 67-year-old secretary has flown it to St. Petersburg, Moscow, Cairo, Tel Aviv (with a stop in Ramallah) and Amman, and held parleys with two presidents, three prime ministers, three ministers of defense and a king.

By the time it's my turn to step into the plane's conference room, Mr. Gates, tieless and in blue jeans, looks bushed. He has just wrapped up a nearly two-hour phone call on Libya with President Obama and the National Security Council. NATO is about to assume primary responsibility for enforcing the no-fly zone. Benghazi has been saved by Western intervention, but it's far from clear whether other besieged cities will have equal luck.

I begin by asking Mr. Gates the same question House Speaker John Boehner recently put to Mr. Obama: Is it acceptable for Moammar Gadhafi to remain in power after the military mission concludes?

"This mission was never about regime change," Mr. Gates says. "Certainly it was not one of the military objectives." He recites the mandate of U.N. Security Council resolutions -- to establish a no-fly zone and protect civilians -- and concludes: "I think we've come pretty close to accomplishing those objectives."

Does that mean "Mission Accomplished"? Even as we spoke, the besieged Libyan city of Misurata was without water and electricity and running low on food and medicine. Yet Mr. Gates is sanguine, though perhaps less about the outcome for Libya than for the U.S. The imposition of the no-fly zone, he says proudly, was "a textbook case."

He appears even more pleased by the benefits to the Pentagon of the transition to NATO control: "The resources that we're going to commit to it are, I think, almost certainly going to diminish," he says, describing a U.S. support role that includes "electronic warfare" and "tanking fighters [aerial refueling] from other countries."

But where does all this leave the Libyan people? Twice Mr. Gates stresses that "at the end of the day this needs to be settled by the Libyans themselves," adding that "I don't think we ever had illusions about the ability to reverse the gains [Gadhafi had made] on the ground, other than stopping him from doing more and stopping him from slaughtering civilians." But he also says that if Gadhafi "were to send a big column toward Benghazi there would be the authority to take it out." The suggestion here is that NATO will not do very much to help the rebels to win, but it will backstop them to keep them from losing.

It's hard to deny the virtues of this approach: It does not overcommit the West, either militarily or financially; it stems the bloodletting even if it doesn't halt it; and it asks the Libyans to win their own freedom. But it's equally difficult to deny its drawbacks, not the least of which is that the longer Gadhafi hangs on to power the longer the crisis will roil Western politics and consume Western resources.

Here again Mr. Gates seems fairly optimistic. "The idea that [Gadhafi] needs to go . . . goes without saying," he says. "But how long it takes, how it comes about, remains to be seen. Whether elements of the army decide to go to the other side, as some small elements have, whether the family cracks -- who knows how this is going to play out."

He is less persuasive when he starts naming the various nonmilitary tools, such as economic sanctions and indictments from the International Criminal Court, that the West could use to bring further pressure on Gadhafi. Saddam Hussein survived a dozen years under sanctions and a no-fly zone, and Sudan's Omar Bashir has more or less laughed off the ICC indictments against him for genocide.

A larger consideration for Mr. Gates is how the crisis in Libya fits into American interests. "There are American national security interests and American vital interests where, in my view, we need to act decisively and if necessary act unilaterally," he says. "This is not one of them."

Then again, neither does Mr. Gates think that the crisis in Libya amounts to little more than a strictly humanitarian tragedy, on a par with, say, last year's earthquake in Haiti. "It is a concern of ours if more than a million Egyptians in Libya decide they have to immigrate home. It is a concern if civil war contributes to destabilization in either Tunisia or Egypt." Libya, he concludes, "is not a vital national interest of the United States. But it is an interest."

Mention of Egypt turns the interview to the broader changes throughout the Middle East. Mr. Gates call them "tectonic . . . frozen for 60 years and now all of a sudden they're all moving." His counsel is to deal with countries as they are and situations as they come -- "our reaction in Libya will be very different than our reaction in Tunisia or in Egypt or Bahrain" -- but he also sees lessons.

"Maybe the Syrians can take a lesson out of what happened in Egypt, where the army stood aside and let the people demonstrate," he says when I ask what he makes of the growing domestic opposition to the regime of Bashar Assad. But as for whether he would favor regime change in Damascus, he strikes a more cautious note: "No, I'm not going to go that far."

Mr. Gates also rejects the view that the ultimate winner from the upheavals throughout the Middle East is Iran. He notes the "very stark" contrast between the "repression of any dissent, any protest, compared with what is going on in any number of other countries in the region." Over the longer term, he says, "this is a hugely negative message in terms of Iran and what Iran is trying to do."

Still, Mr. Gates awards the Biggest Loser trophy to al Qaeda, which he believes is "being rendered irrelevant, at least in a political sense." Al Qaeda's basic political pitch, and the source of its popular appeal, rests on the idea that the only way of replacing corrupt Muslim governments with better ones is through violence. Now, the examples of Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and elsewhere "show that these are countries that are tolerating demonstrations." In that sort of atmosphere, Mr. Gates seems to think, the appeal of the bullet or bomb is bound to wane, while the appeal of the ballot box will grow.

More Gates optimism. Is it justified? Al Qaeda has never lacked for excuses, or recruits, to mount terrorist attacks, whether against despotisms or democracies. In Egypt, last week's referendum on a package of constitutional reforms that pave the way toward early parliamentary and presidential elections was a huge win for the Muslim Brotherhood, which stands to gain from going to the polls before its secular opponents can organize. The Iranian "political model" may be out of vogue on the Arab street, but that doesn't mean that all of Tehran's regional ventures -- including support for Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon -- are unsuccessful or unpopular.

As our interview nears its end, I turn to a speech Mr. Gates gave last month to the cadets at West Point. In widely quoted remarks, he said that "Any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined,' as Gen. MacArthur so delicately put it." I ask him whether that line should be taken to suggest that the United States should never have entered the wars it is fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"To tell you the truth, I wish I hadn't even had that sentence in the speech," he confesses. "I should have taken it out because it was a distraction from the larger message in the speech, which was the importance of the flexibility of the American military to deal with a range of threats."

Mr. Gates clearly seems pained by the subject and eager to clear the record. "I'm the guy who not only increased the end strength of the Army and the Marine Corps, but pressed for the increase in the number of troops in Afghanistan. I totally believe in the mission that we're in in Afghanistan. And so, you know, I was really dismayed to see that what I had said was interpreted as questioning the mission in Afghanistan, because I absolutely do not. I totally believe in it."

Again, Mr. Gates circles back to his point: "I believe we have a winning strategy. So I am totally committed in that respect. And just to repeat, I was just really dismayed that what I said was misinterpreted that way."

Mr. Gates has made it clear that his tenure as secretary will end this year, and his trip last week -- particularly in St. Petersburg, where he addressed naval officers and reminisced about the Cold War -- had a wistful, valedictory quality. It seems appropriate to ask him to define his legacy.

"I have a feeling I'm going to get asked this question a lot," Mr. Gates says, laughing.

His answer comes in two parts. "When I took this job," he says, "everybody -- meaning journalists, politicians and so on -- had said I would be judged on the outcome in Iraq, and I testified my agenda in this job is Iraq, Iraq, Iraq. And so I think that the partnership with [Gen.] Dave Petraeus and having Iraq be the place it is -- that'll be one of the principal evaluations that I think are made of my time in office."

Then he comes to the second part: "The thing that would mean the most to me when I leave this job is if those kids in uniform remember they had a secretary of defense who, from the first day, they knew had their back."

Mr. Stephens writes the Journal's Global View column.

In Germany, an election hangover; Politicus

BY JOHN VINOCCUR

29 mars 2011

[International Herald Tribune](#)

Two thoughts about Angela Merkel's weekend of political debacle:

Her government's shifts and pivots in an effort to avoid defeat in a regional election override in importance the loss itself. And they leave Germany's governing coalition with a fracture in credibility affecting the country's international role and notions of its leadership in Europe.

The historical comeuppance in Baden-Württemberg for Mrs. Merkel's Christian Democrats, after a half century in power there, does not break the back of her national coalition with the Free Democrats.

But it is the product of a weeks-long episode of mood-swinging, to all appearances profoundly self-involved politics — acknowledged publicly by some coalition leaders as "hysterical" or not fully "rational" — where party convictions and issues of basic political identity and commitment were ditched or defenestrated.

In an effort to save Baden-Württemberg while Japan's nuclear crisis and the Libyan rebellion were making headlines, the national government, in contradiction of its own policies, seemed to light two of Germany's shortest and most emotional fuses — exceptional anxiety concerning nuclear energy and hesitation to share full military risks even against the most obvious evildoers (think of the number of German caveats on engagement in Afghanistan).

Indeed, the government effectively turned its back on Mrs. Merkel's supposed virtues of loyalty, resolve and calm as its dominant campaign message.

Instead, it appeared to pander to the electorate's most hypersensitive instincts:

Although tsunamis hit Germany with about the same regularity as sandstorms, the coalition parties fled from their traditional tolerance of civilian nuclear power. Mrs. Merkel ordered that seven nuclear power plants be taken out of service for a period of three months — just after their operating lives had been extended with the chancellor's assurance that they were the world's safest.

Virtually at the same time, the coalition dodged voting with the United States, Britain and France in favor of a U.N. resolution enabling authorization of a no-flight zone over **Libya**, chose abstention alongside Russia and China and then said it would not participate in an international coalition's military effort to protect Libyan civilians.

The reaction at home? Nuclear power became the biggest and most frightening issue for the state's voters, while national polling on the Libyan intervention produced results suggesting a burst of German exceptionalism: 62 percent said the action was correct, while in parallel 65 percent insisted, with lotsa luck to its alliance pals, Germany must stay out.

Across party lines, and before the voting, the political class picked up on the deepest ramifications of a contradictory-looking attempt by the government in Berlin to both spook voters and coddle their fears.

Patrick Adenauer, grandson of postwar Germany's first chancellor and head of the Association of Family Enterprise — Christian Democrat roots don't go deeper — told Handelsblatt, the newspaper: "The German reactions to the events in **Libya** and Japan appear hysterical on one hand, and on the other without any substantive basis."

Hans-Ulrich Klose, the man Mrs. Merkel named last year as special coordinator for German-American relations (he has since left the post because of illness in his family), maintained that the situation damaged Germany's reputation in Europe. The Social Democrat told me in a conversation that the election campaign's pirouettes "raised the issue of our reliability. Germany has lost credibility."

And in relation to America? Mr. Klose was too much a diplomat to comment.

In Europe, isolation and incalculability, the two most dreaded words on a German must-avoid list of strategic imperatives, were in evidence.

Concerning German incalculability, Belgium spoke in an unusually loud voice in condemning Berlin's flip on its nuclear reactors. Interior Minister Annemie Turtelboom called it a "one-sided and ill-considered solo run" that wrong-footed her country, a proponent of nuclear power.

As for isolation, all of Germany's neighbors on its western borders — spearheaded by France, and including Belgium, which also had sided with Chancellor Gerhard Schröder in staying out of the Iraq conflict — were contributing aircraft or ships to the Libyan interdiction efforts.

Here was the essence of the problem that the German government, as Europe's de facto leader, created for itself in a month of openly subordinating to very risky domestic political considerations what were thought to be its international credo and sense of responsibility.

For some observers, it had been caught out acting far beyond enlightened self-interest and, unpredictably, abandoning principles.

This performance matches up with bridges of doubt now extending to a German role as an economic model for the European Union's members.

As one argument goes, this Germany's economy is not a template providing a tangible plan for rapid E.U. growth. Notably, according to a Finance Ministry update, Germany's growth rate will decline this year to 2.3 percent (losing a third of its 2010 gains) and then fall again to 1.7 percent in 2012.

Two German advisers to the major service-sector trade union Verdi attached an additional warning last week. They wrote that the German model's clamps on real wage increases were "no example for the old continent."

Their bottom line: "If Europe becomes more German, it will be threatened by deflation."

Other economists are asking out loud whether the weakness of German landesbanken and the government's lack of interest in consolidating them do not suggest Germany's preference to continue paying bailout money to the European Union's most fragile countries rather than restructuring their debt once and for all — and, in the process, threatening the existence of creditors among the undercapitalized banks in Germany.

So what happens now — a confessional wave of admissions of error, and promises by Mrs. Merkel of reform and allegiance to her party's conservative principles in her remaining two years? Not very likely, I was told by a coalition grandee.

Here's a reminder of why it's difficult to expect a Christian Democrat-led government re-evaluation of its election campaign's calculations.

When Gerhard Schröder defeated Helmut Kohl to become chancellor in 1998's national elections, it was on a challenger's record that included rejection of German reunification and initial opposition to the introduction of the euro.

Mr. Kohl derided him as an upstart who stood on the wrong side of history.

Beaten by Mr. Schröder and with a mood of national self-involvement now steering his country away from sharing Europe's and the world's burdens, the C.D.U.'s father of German unity and the Maastricht Treaty got a lot of good out of standing on the right side.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Date: 17 March 2011

Meeting no.: 6,498

Code: S/RES/1973 ([Document](#))

Vote:

For: 10	Abs.: 5	Against:
0		

Subject: [2011 Libyan uprising](#)

Result: Adopted

[Security Council](#) composition in 2011:

permanent members:

[CHN](#) [FRA](#) [RUS](#) [UK](#) [USA](#)

non-permanent members:

[BIH](#) [BRA](#) [COL](#) [DEU](#) [GAB](#)
 [IND](#) [LBN](#) [NGA](#) [PRT](#) [RSA](#)

[United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973](#), on the [situation in Libya](#), is a measure that was adopted on 17 March 2011. The [Security Council resolution](#) was proposed by [France](#), [Lebanon](#), and the [United Kingdom](#).^{[1][2]}

Ten [Security Council](#) members voted in the affirmative ([Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Colombia](#), [Gabon](#), [Lebanon](#), [Nigeria](#), [Portugal](#), [South Africa](#), and permanent members [France](#), the [United Kingdom](#), and the [United States](#)). Five ([Brazil](#), [Germany](#), and [India](#), and permanent members [China](#) and [Russia](#)) abstained, with none opposed.^[3]

The resolution demands "an immediate [ceasefire](#)" and authorizes the international community to establish a [no-fly zone over Libya](#) and to use all means necessary short of foreign occupation to protect civilians.^[4]

Key points

The resolution, adopted under [Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter](#):

- demands the immediate establishment of a ceasefire and a complete end to violence and all attacks against, and abuses of, civilians;
- imposes a [no-fly zone over Libya](#);
- authorises all necessary means to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas, except for a "foreign occupation force";
- strengthens the [arms embargo](#) and particularly action against [mercenaries](#), by allowing for forcible inspections of ships and planes;
- imposes a ban on all Libyan-designated flights;
- imposes an asset freeze on assets owned by the Libyan authorities, and reaffirms that such assets should be used for the benefit of the Libyan people;
- extends the travel ban and assets freeze of [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970](#) to a number of additional individuals and Libyan entities;
- establishes a panel of experts to monitor and promote sanctions implementation.

France's war president

Sarkozy relaunched

Will a popular Libyan adventure restore the president's fortunes?

The Economist Mar 24th 2011 | PARIS | from the print edition



“LET’S savour this moment when France overturned history,” cooed a Sunday newspaper. “France has pulled off a masterstroke,” chimed in *Libération*, a leftish daily. The French intervention in Libya was universally applauded, in a sign of cross-party unity not seen since they opposed the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Dominique de Villepin, a Gaullist rival to President Nicolas Sarkozy, said France had “lived up to its ideals”. Even Jean-Marc Ayrault, the Socialists’ parliamentary leader, applauded his country’s “decisive action” and “commitment to the Libyan people”.

As the television beamed images of fighter planes taking off from Corsica and the aircraft-carrier *Charles de Gaulle* steaming out of Toulon, there was a sense of restored pride but also giddiness at the abrupt turnaround in France’s policy on north Africa. Only two months ago the French offered another Arab autocrat, in Tunisia, help in containing street riots. Earlier this month Mr Sarkozy’s impulsive decision to recognise Libyan rebels surprised even his new foreign minister, Alain Juppé. Now France has put an air force behind its fine words, with military strikes against an Arab leader that would once have been unthinkable. So far, 66% of the French approve, according to one poll.

Will this be enough to lift Mr Sarkozy from his record low level of popularity? The president has sunk so far in public esteem that many praise his decision but doubt his motives. Mr Sarkozy faces a tough presidential election next year. With the far-right National Front resurgent, recent polls suggest that he might struggle even to make it into the second round. Humanitarian considerations have hardly guided his foreign policy so far, as Bernard Kouchner, his first foreign minister (and a human-rights advocate), found. Indeed, this week the French were flying the same Rafale fighters over Libya that they had recently been trying to sell to Muammar Qaddafi. If not for electoral gain, some ask, how to explain Mr Sarkozy’s zeal for military intervention in the name of a “universal conscience”?

It is hard, when it comes to this mercurial president, to disentangle conviction from opportunism. His personal interest in playing the unifying moral leader, doing the right thing in the name of timeless French values, is evident. He leads as much from instinct as from calculation. And there has been plenty of improvisation along the way, not least when Bernard-Henri Lévy, a celebrity philosopher who had visited eastern Libya, brought rebel representatives to the Elysée palace.

But, for once, Mr Sarkozy’s personal and France’s national interests may coincide. Just across the Mediterranean from Libya, France feels exposed to the immigration a protracted civil war might prompt. Its credibility in the French-speaking Maghreb, its traditional sphere of influence, is at stake. Moreover, much of the French initiative has been led by Mr Juppé, who is not a close political ally of Mr Sarkozy. A former prime

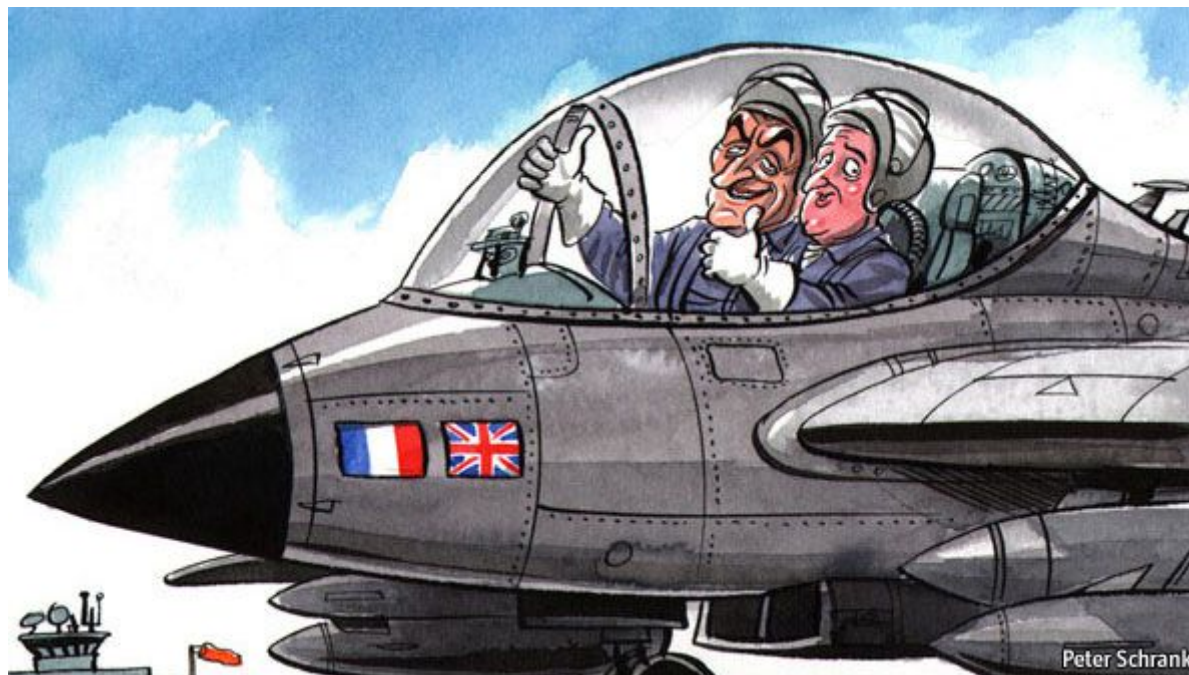
minister, and foreign minister in the 1990s, he brings experience and authority to the job. Initially hesitant about going into Libya, he has acted as a useful counterweight to the impetuous president, who has in turn given him space to speak for France. Mr Juppé went in person to plead France's cause at the UN, the only national minister to do so.

Mr Sarkozy has taken a gamble with this mission, which has no clear endgame and which could yet turn out to be messy. In a parliamentary debate this week the government said it had already succeeded in preventing a bloodbath in Benghazi. The real trouble for Mr Sarkozy is that, even if voters approve of the Libyan operation, they do not yet approve of him. In the first round of cantonal elections on March 20th, the day after French jets struck, his party scored just 17%, only two points ahead of the National Front.

A force for good

France and Britain are leading the intervention in Libya. Rightly so

The Economist Mar 24th 2011 | from the print edition Charlemagne



WHETHER it was out of rashness or conviction, Nicolas Sarkozy has certainly acted boldly. The French president was first to recognise the “national council” in Benghazi, first to talk of the need for air strikes and first to send planes to repel Muammar Qaddafi’s marauding forces. It was easily the biggest diplomatic and military moment of his presidency. So much for the old American canard about cheese-eating surrender monkeys.

Mr Sarkozy did not act alone, of course. His alliance with Britain’s David Cameron was essential. And America, belatedly, played an indispensable political and military role. Yet this action differs from the previous pattern of America leading and Britain following, with France opportunistically backing the Americans (Iraq, 1991) or opposing them (Iraq, 2003). This time America wants to stand back. So for the first time since the 1956 Suez crisis, Britain and France are at the forefront of military action in the Middle East. This is not to say they are reverting to old-style imperialism; both are too enfeebled for that. The British and French know they must act together to exert any influence. And to do that, they must overcome the legacy of Suez.

In 1956 the two colluded with Israel to attack Egypt and retake the Suez Canal, which had been nationalised by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Anthony Eden, the British prime minister, saw him as a new Hitler. The French resented his support for resistance to their rule in Algeria. America considered the assault as an act of imperialism that would inflame the Arab world and benefit the Soviet Union. It forced the invaders to withdraw, granting Nasser a victory, bringing about Eden’s downfall, hastening decolonisation and ushering in an era of American dominance in the region.

Britain and France, whose alliance dated to the *entente cordiale* of 1904 and two world wars, drew opposite lessons from this humiliation. The British resolved to cleave to America. Even their nuclear missiles were provided by the Americans. France chose greater autonomy. It sought to build up the European project as a counterweight to America and to create its independent nuclear *force de frappe*. A decade later it withdrew from NATO’s integrated military command.

As two medium-sized European powers, both with permanent seats on the UN Security Council and a legacy of empire, Britain and France are at the same time natural partners and natural rivals. These days, they are being pushed into greater co-operation. One reason is Mr Sarkozy's decision to return France fully to the NATO fold. Another is the weakening of French demands for the EU to develop its own military capability. Finally, the rising cost of advanced weapons is driving both to seek defence savings. In November Britain and France signed a defence pact to share capabilities, including research on nuclear warheads and the operation of aircraft-carriers. Welcome to the *entente frugale*, said the wags.

It is striking how in the European-led intervention in Libya the two big Europe-based institutions, NATO and the EU, have so far been left on the sidelines. This is in part because both have members who are sceptical or even hostile to the Libyan adventure, notably Germany and (in NATO) Turkey. In part it is because old habits die hard, even in the heat of military action in Libya. France resisted Britain's wish to see NATO take over the mission. Britain opposed French attempts to get the EU to lead a naval force to enforce the arms embargo. A compromise is emerging: NATO will provide military co-ordination, but politicians from the allied parties will give political direction (see [article](#), [article](#)). The EU may then use its embryonic military tools to offer humanitarian aid.

Given such cacophony, one begins to sympathise with the unilateralism of Donald Rumsfeld, the American defence secretary during the second Iraq war, who decreed that "the mission determines the coalition". But as America has found in both Iraq and Afghanistan, institutional backing helps to maintain a coalition. Italy, among others, demanded NATO leadership. Another timeless lesson is the benefit of securing UN and Arab support. "Suez? This is different. In Suez, we did not have the Arabs," says Alain Juppé, the French foreign minister.

The rest is silence

The Libyan crisis also punctures some inflated hopes about other European countries. Italy, the former colonial power, was hopelessly out of touch at first and remains a minor player. The east Europeans have been quiet. For all the talk of Germany emerging as a "normal" power, liberated from post-war guilt, it remains handicapped, with the pacifist impulse still extremely powerful. Germany wanted sanctions against Colonel Qaddafi, but balked when they failed to stop him. It would not even let its ships enforce the arms embargo on Libya. Germany's aversion to the use of force, even by its allies, must raise new doubts about its demand for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

Libya has equally exposed the absurdity of the dream of a European army. What good would this be if Germany (or some other peacenik country) refused to allow it to protect people against a tyrant on Europe's doorstep? So the use of military force will remain a matter largely for those willing and able to exert it. That means Britain and France will continue to dictate the terms of European military engagement. They account for nearly half of Europe's total defence spending and more than two-thirds of what it spends on military research and development. The more Britain and France can share resources, the better for Europe's military power. Success in Libya could spur them to deeper integration; failure might push them apart again. The stakes in Libya are obviously high for the future of the Libyan people. But spare a thought for the future of European defence co-operation.

The challenge of Libya

Where will it end?

The Americans, the Europeans and the Arabs must all hold their nerve

The Economist Mar 24th 2011 | from the print edition



THE spectacle of American, British and French missiles pulverising an Arab and Muslim country at the dead of night arouses a sense of foreboding. Such ventures have too often begun with good intentions and naive overconfidence, as oil-rich despots see their armour crumple and burn beneath superior Western technology. Within weeks, though, vainglory turns into a costly and bloody quagmire.

Yet nobody could accuse Barack Obama and his allies, chiefly Britain's David Cameron and France's Nicolas Sarkozy, of overconfidence in attacking Libya on March 19th. It is hard to think of a military enterprise that has been conceived in so much doubt and anxiety. What if Muammar Qaddafi sits out the raids in his bunker? What if Libya is partitioned? What if, chastened by news footage of dead women and children in a Tripoli market, the coalition starts to fall apart? What if many of the eastern Libyans whom the outside world is protecting turn out to sympathise with al-Qaeda? What if they go on to behave as murderously as the colonel and his paid killers?

The answers to those questions start with the case for intervening in Libya. Western sceptics complain that they have "no dog in this fight". Libyans, they say, should be left to submit to the colonel or kill him off, as best they can.

That view is too parochial. Colonel Qaddafi is the Arab world's most violent despot. In one day in 1996 his men killed 1,270 prisoners in a Tripoli jail. He has backed terrorism and assassinated dissidents. Western leaders were right to have given him a chance to turn a new leaf after 2003, when he renounced his nuclear programme. But when peaceful protesters marched for change a few weeks ago he shot them—seemingly with relish. Whatever the course of the coming weeks and months, do not forget that the colonel and his sons had vowed to slaughter the people of Tobruk and Benghazi, house by house. In the narrowest of senses, a mission that many said was pointless and too late has already chalked up one success.

Moreover, what happens in Libya, for good or ill, will affect its more hopeful neighbours, Egypt and Tunisia. Farther afield, even Syria is beginning to stir and its government may be tempted to be as ruthless as Libya's (see [article](#)). If violence prevails in Libya, the momentum for peaceful change across the Middle East may drain away, as both autocrats and protesters elsewhere in the Arab world conclude that violence is after all an essential tool for getting their way.

Be practical, as well as principled

The sceptics' second retort is that the West is guilty of hypocrisy. As it inveighs against Colonel Qaddafi, its Saudi allies have helped snuff out the flame of democracy in the Gulf state of Bahrain. And surely the West should stop propping up the Yemeni dictator, Ali Abdullah Saleh, whose forces have just shot dead dozens of protesters?

Here practicality—some would say *realpolitik*—comes into play, sometimes frustratingly. The violence in Bahrain is on a vastly smaller scale than that in Libya; and the West is locked into a military alliance with both Bahrain—home to America's Fifth Fleet—and its royal family's protector, Saudi Arabia. To take on Bahrain's rulers would be to endanger that alliance—and they have run a more open society than Libya anyway. As for Yemen, it is an ungovernable snakepit, home to rival tribes, secessionists and a local branch of al-Qaeda. Nobody in his right mind would intervene there. Neither Bahrain or Yemen is susceptible to an air campaign as Libya is, with its long stretches of desert that expose Colonel Qaddafi's advancing tanks. You intervene when you can, not to be consistent.

The sceptics' third complaint is that the West has entered this campaign without defining the mission. That is both unfair and true. It is unfair because dictators do not work to a diplomatic timetable. Colonel Qaddafi's rapid advance to Benghazi meant that the outside world had to intervene within days or not at all. But it is true that there has been some indecisiveness—principally from Mr Obama. That helped forge a broader coalition, but the West now has its work cut out. It must urgently decide who is in charge, clarify the powers granted by the Security Council resolution enabling Libya's civilians to be protected by "all necessary means" and, most important of all, determine what the campaign's aims should be.

A fight that needs a general

America wants to cede overall control as soon as it has carried out the bulk of the initial bombing. Although to some extent Mr Obama is again shrinking from leadership, it probably makes sense. The mission will look less American: it will force the Europeans to be responsible for a cause they championed; and in NATO there is a body that can take operational control.

The difficult decision is whether Colonel Qaddafi's removal, dead or alive, should be an explicit aim of the enforcers. The UN resolution makes no mention of such a thing, though many Western and Arab leaders have said they want the colonel to go. As commander-in-chief of security forces that have already killed hundreds of civilians since peaceful protests started a month ago, he is arguably a legitimate target. But it would be far better if his own people dealt with him, handed him over to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, or chased him into exile, rather than let him be singled out by his Western enemies for elimination.

behind military action in Libya

Leaving the Libyans to do that unaided is admittedly a risk, but the odds are on the rebels' side. Once Colonel Qaddafi cannot pound cities such as Benghazi with impunity, opposition across the country will grow again. Isolated and economically strangled, the colonel and his regime would be lucky to survive indefinitely. Even if Libya were temporarily partitioned, the West could keep up the no-fly zone with minimal effort. Gradually, the noose would tighten around the colonel, especially as the anti-Qaddafi east holds most of Libya's oil.

Libya is not Iraq. The West has learned through bitter experience to avoid the grievous mistakes it made from the outset of that venture. For one thing, the current mission is indisputably legal. For another, it has, at least for now, the backing of Libya's own people and—even allowing for some wobbles from Turkey and the Arab League—of most Arab and Muslim countries. Libya's population is a quarter the size of Iraq's, and the country should be easier to control: almost all its people, a more homogeneous lot albeit with sharp tribal loyalties, live along the Mediterranean coastal strip. If Colonel Qaddafi's state crumbles, the West should not seek to disband his army or the upper echelons of his administration, as it foolishly did in Iraq. The opposition's interim national council contains secular liberals, Islamists, Muslim Brothers, tribal figures and recent defectors from the camp of Colonel Qaddafi. The West should recognise the council as a transitional government, provided

that it promises to hold multiparty elections. Above all, there must be no military occupation by outsiders. It is tempting to put time-limits on such a venture, but that would be futile.

Success in Libya is not guaranteed—how could it be? It is a violent country that may well succumb to more violence, and will not become a democracy any time soon. But its people deserve to be spared the dictator's gun and be given a chance of a better future.

La course folle des rebelles sur la route de Syrte

Par [Thierry Oberlé](#)

28/03/2011 | Mise à jour : 22:50

S'ABONNER AU FIGARO.FR - 5 €/mois

REPORTAGE - L'armée de la révolution s'est rapprochée de la ville natale du Guide, où elle est attendue par les membres de la tribu de Kadhafi.

La manifestation armée et automobile qui sert de force militaire aux révolutionnaires libyens s'est lancée de nouveau sur la route de l'**Ouest**. Seul champ de bataille et fil conducteur de l'étrange guerre du désert que se livrent Kadhafi et les insurgés, le ruban de bitume qui file dans le désert au fond du golfe de Syrte, entre lignes à hautes tensions, raffineries et dromadaires, était de nouveau parcouru par le joyeux cortège de la révolution. Jeep aux pare-brise baissés, conducteurs en lunettes de sable et cagoule, minibus chargés de combattants, camions-bennes pleins de militants hurlants, voitures particulières couvertes d'autocollants patriotiques, l'armée révolutionnaire roule à présent vers Syrte. Depuis la reprise d'Ajdabiya samedi matin, les révolutionnaires talonnent l'armée de Kadhafi, qui se replie précipitamment devant eux, défaite par les raids aériens occidentaux. Brega, Uqala, Ras Lanouf, Ben Jawad, passées depuis le début de la révolution à plusieurs reprises aux mains des rebelles puis des loyalistes, sont de nouveau contrôlées par la révolution. À chaque fois, les miliciens établissent des points de contrôle, et saluent les véhicules qui passent en klaxonnant follement. Ces étapes de la longue route du désert ont été reprises sans coup férir. Simples bourgades le long de l'autoroute qui longe la côte du golfe de Syrte, elles n'offraient aucune possibilité aux forces de Kadhafi de livrer des combats retardateurs. D'autant que **les avions de la coalition** restent les maîtres du ciel et sont capables de frapper n'importe quelle cible dans ce paysage plat comme un tapis.

Depuis samedi, le front, ou ce qui en tient lieu dans cette étrange guerre sans beaucoup de combats, qui se livre le long d'une route unique, s'est déplacé de près de 300 kilomètres vers l'ouest.

Atmosphère festive

L'avance des milices révolutionnaires a été ralentie, puis stoppée lundi matin par des tirs d'artillerie un peu au nord du village de Nofilia, à environ une centaine de kilomètres de Syrte, la ville d'origine de Kadhafi. **Les révolutionnaires se sont déployés selon leur formation de prédilection, l'embouteillage, en attendant que le front soit ouvert par les bombes de l'Otan ou par le repli de leurs adversaires.**

Les renforts sont encore loin derrière. Le recul des forces de **Kadhafi** a eu pour résultat de raccourcir considérablement leurs lignes de ravitaillement, pour allonger d'autant celles de la rébellion.

La guerre du désert est une affaire de logistique. Les distances énormes en plein désert imposent une organisation dont les rebelles sont dépourvus. Les plus prévoyants entassent à l'arrière de leurs pick-up couvertures synthétiques et packs d'eau minérale, caisses de munitions et jerricanes d'essence. L'essence, presque aussi vitale que l'eau, est devenue la denrée rare sur le front mouvant de la révolution libyenne. Les grosses raffineries de Ras Lanouf et de Brega sont un paysage ironique pour une panne de carburant. Les stations-service qui s'échelonnent le long de la route ont leurs cuves pleines, mais les pompes sont privées d'électricité. Alors on improvise. Les regards des cuves sont ouverts, et les miliciens, mais aussi l'armée de curieux ou de joyeux supporteurs qui l'accompagne, s'agglutinent autour des orifices. Et avec des bouteilles d'eau minérale découpées en récipients et fixées au bout de longues perches, vont puiser le liquide vert et odorant avant de le verser dans les réservoirs.

Et l'on reprend la route. L'atmosphère est de nouveau à la fête, on klaxonne et on s'accroche aux fenêtres des voitures comme si la guerre était une sortie de match de foot. Après le village de Nofilia, la liesse se calme un peu alors que résonnent les coups de canons. Les forces de Kadhafi ont cessé de reculer, et commencent à livrer un combat retardateur. Le prochain objectif est Syrte. Mais la ville, à la différence des autres villes, comme Misrata, un peu plus au nord sur la côte, ne s'est pas soulevée.

«Une bonne moitié de la ville est apparentée à la tribu de Kadhafi», explique Kamal, un combattant un peu plus expérimenté que les autres, en bleu de travail et chapeau de brousse. Soit environ 70.000 personnes, qui, selon le système complexe d'allégeances et d'alliances tribales sous-jacent à toute la politique libyenne, n'ont aucun intérêt à rallier les révolutionnaires, du moins pas tant que Kadhafi tient toujours. «Ça sera plus compliqué qu'ailleurs, ces gens risquent de se battre», ajoute-t-il. Située en plein sur la route de Tripoli, Syrte ne peut pas être contournée. Aussi longtemps que Kadhafi et ses fidèles tiennent la ville, la progression des révolutionnaires vers l'ouest et vers la capitale est rendue impossible.

Germany's regional elections

Angela's trauma

The Economist Mar 28th 2011, 9:19 by B.U. | BERLIN



"POWER Shift in German Regional Election" sounds like the headline for a yawn-inducing story a reader can safely ignore. Not in this case. Two western states voted yesterday. The results in wine-producing Rhineland-Palatinate were interesting but unremarkable. But those in Baden-Württemberg, an industrial powerhouse, were sensational. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the party of the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, lost power in the state after occupying office for 58 years. The Greens will take its place, the [first time](#) the party has run a German state. The outcome will traumatise Mrs Merkel's coalition in Berlin.

Until [Japan's nuclear catastrophe](#), Baden-Württemberg's ruling coalition, a partnership between the CDU and the Free Democrats (FDP), looked like it was headed for a narrow victory. The state's conservative premier, Stefan Mappus, is not the most likeable politician in Germany. But voters enjoy Baden-Württemberg's fast economic growth and [low unemployment](#) (the lowest youth unemployment rate in Europe, Mr Mappus often boasted). Why tinker with that?

Mr Mappus, however, happens to be the CDU's leading cheerleader for nuclear power. Japan's nuclear mishaps created a wave of fear in Germany that swept his government away. The CDU remains the biggest party in Baden-Württemberg, with 39% of the vote, a drop of five percentage points from the last election in 2006. The FDP's vote fell by half, to just above 5%.

It was the anti-nuclear surge that lifted the Greens into power. The party's share of the vote doubled to 24%. Voter participation jumped, from 53% in 2006 to 66%. The Greens apparently captured the lion's share of the new voters. Nearly half Baden-Württemberg's voters said that energy was the most important election issue. Among Green voters, it was the top issue for 85%.

In the wake of the Japanese disaster Mrs Merkel had tried to avert disaster by [shutting down](#) seven nuclear plants and suspending an [unpopular decision](#), made last autumn, to let nuclear facilities operate for 12 extra years to reduce the cost of shifting to renewable sources of energy. But voters saw this as the blatant political ploy it was, especially after the FDP economy minister, Rainer Brüderle, was quoted as having said [exactly that](#) behind closed doors (he denies making the remarks). The ruse did not save Mr Mappus.

The losses were the freakish effects of fallout blown in from Japan, proclaimed CDU and FDP spin doctors. In Rhineland-Palatinate, the CDU actually managed to increase its share of the vote slightly, although not by enough to topple Kurt Beck of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). But the line is unconvincing. For one thing, Mrs Merkel's handling of the nuclear crisis is as much an issue as the crisis itself, especially after the leaking of Mr Brüderle's reported remarks. The CDU's modest upturn in Rhineland-Palatinate only slightly lessens the shock of losing power in the party's heartland.

For the FDP the results are a disaster. The party barely met the 5% threshold for entering the legislature in Baden-Württemberg. In Rhineland-Palatinate it was evicted. Much of the blame will fall on Guido Westerwelle, the party's chairman and Germany's foreign minister. In opposition he was an effective blunderbuss but he has struggled to become a statesman since taking office after the federal elections in 2009.

Foreign ministers are usually among Germany's most popular politicians; Mr Westerwelle is among the least. He may be ousted as the FDP's leader, by the party's convention in May if not before. The FDP's trauma will further unsettle Mrs Merkel's "Christian-liberal" coalition, which has so far failed to find the clear sense of purpose that voters had expected from an alliance of like-minded partners. There is little immediate threat to Mrs Merkel's hold on power, in part because the CDU has no leaders with the stature to challenge her. But she must now finally explain to voters what her government is for.

Yesterday was sobering for other parties as well. In Rhineland-Palatinate the SPD's share of the vote plunged from 46% to 36%. Mr Beck will continue to govern, but in a coalition with the triumphant Greens rather than with an absolute majority. In Baden-Württemberg the SPD achieved its goal of toppling Mr Mappus but its 23% share of the vote was its lowest yet in the state (ironically it will now probably enter government as the Greens' junior coalition partner).

The ex-communist Left Party, which is strong in eastern Germany and had been making inroads in the west, failed to enter either state parliament. Its western ascent has, for now, been stopped. Only the Greens, the progeny of youthful protest that once styled themselves an "anti-party party", have anything to celebrate.

Baden-Württemberg's incoming Green premier, Winfried Kretschmann, is an avuncular pragmatist well suited to the state's conservative temperament. A former schoolteacher (of chemistry, biology and ethics), he is a pillar of the Catholic church. A leader of the Greens' "realist" wing, he cares as much about fiscal discipline as he does about renewable energy. He now has a chance to prove to Germany that greenery need not be the enemy of growth, innovation and employment. If he fails, the Greens' triumph in Baden-Württemberg will turn out to have been a radiation-related fluke.

Into Libya

The birth of an Obama doctrine

The Economist online Mar 28th 2011, 23:37 by Lexington



Born, as we are, out of a revolution by those who longed to be free, we welcome the fact that history is on the move in the Middle East and North Africa, and that young people are leading the way. Because wherever people long to be free, they will find a friend in the United States. Ultimately, it is that faith – those ideals – that are the true measure of American leadership.

THUS President Barack Obama tonight, speaking to the American people directly for the first time since launching Operation Odyssey Dawn and unleashing American missiles in Libya. He had received a great deal of criticism—for “dithering”, for failing to consult Congress, for going too far and doing too little. Now he has answered back—and provided, at the same time, the clearest explanation so far of an “Obama doctrine” of humanitarian military intervention.

Far from “dithering”, goes the White House line, pushed subtly in the speech and explicitly in briefings by senior officials, Mr Obama’s handling of the Libyan crisis has been “relatively extraordinary”. He has in a mere 31 days since the protests started imposed powerful sanctions, frozen Colonel Qaddafi’s assets, secured a robust Security Council resolution, organised an international coalition, executed a near-flawless military campaign, rolled Colonel Qaddafi’s forces back to the west, taken out the colonel’s air defences and knocked out a good deal of his ground forces. All this has been done without having to put American boots on the ground, without American military casualties and with precious few Libyan civilian casualties. Better still, with all this now done, America’s own contribution can decline, NATO can assume command (under an American general but with a Canadian deputy) and the European allies will take on more of the burden. Compare that, say senior administration officials, to the years it took to intervene in Bosnia in the 1990s.

To those hyper-realists who ask why it was necessary for America to entangle itself in Libya at all, the president’s answer appears to run as follows. First, he will never hesitate to use military power, unilaterally if necessary, in defence of the nation’s core interests. No such core interests were at risk in Libya, but some interests were. For example, the unrest in Libya might have disrupted the far more consequential democratic revolutions in Tunisia and especially Egypt, where America has a good deal more at stake. Moreover, it would not have been right to turn a blind eye to the possibility of Colonel Qaddafi carrying out his blood-curdling threats to show “no mercy” to the inhabitants of Benghazi. In such cases, however, it makes powerful sense, when possible, for America to share the burden with allies under the authority of the United Nations. This is how he put it in his speech:

It is true that America cannot use our military wherever repression occurs. And given the costs and risks of intervention, we must always measure our interests against the need for action. But that cannot be an argument for *never* acting on behalf of what’s right. In this particular country – Libya; at this particular moment, we were faced with the prospect of violence on a horrific scale. We had a unique ability to stop that violence: an

international mandate for action, a broad coalition prepared to join us, the support of Arab countries, and a plea for help from the Libyan people themselves. We also had the ability to stop Qaddafi's forces in their tracks without putting American troops on the ground. To brush aside America's responsibility as a leader and – more profoundly – our responsibilities to our fellow human beings under such circumstances would have been a betrayal of who we are. Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different. And as President, I refused to wait for the images of slaughter and mass graves before taking action.

To critics on the opposite side of the argument, who ask why Mr Obama does not just finish the job by killing the colonel himself, the White House's answer is that this would not only exceed the mandate of UN Resolution 1973, which calls only for protecting the civilian population, but risk splintering an artfully assembled alliance. That would leave America "owning" the resulting mess. The administration acknowledges that the denouement in Libya is likely to be messy anyway, but would prefer an internationalised mess to one for which America alone is held responsible. Might this American restraint enable Colonel Qaddafi to hang on for months, even longer, in spite of all the other efforts to squeeze and isolate him? Perhaps: but even if he holds out in some bunker in Tripoli, surrounded by human shields, the White House does not see how he could continue to govern Libya in any practical sense.

Another criticism of Mr Obama is that his policy is inconsistent. Why batter Colonel Qaddafi and not intervene on the side of the opposition in Yemen, Bahrain, perhaps even Syria? Mr Obama is thought to be preparing another speech, some time in the next month or two, that will set out his broader thinking on what the Arab awakening means to Arabs and the wider world, and spell out how America might be able to help nudge it in a favourable direction. Yet the president plainly believes that there are so many variables in the present fast-moving circumstances that it is not possible to adopt a single doctrine that fits each case. Bahrain has cracked down forcibly on the opposition but not in the manner of a Qaddafi—and both America, with its naval base, and Saudi Arabia have a powerful strategic interest in the country. Ditto Yemen, a hodge-podge of tribes and factions with a dangerous al-Qaeda presence.

Until Mr Obama gives his larger speech on the significance of the Arab awakening, much of the White House's focus will continue to be on developments on the ground in Libya. The next tactical steps are supposedly to be decided by the wider alliance talks taking place this week in London. But senior White House officials say that they will continue to push for military action against the colonel's military forces whenever they can be construed to be posing a threat to the civilian population. The United States is already in direct contact with the opposition forces, who will also be represented in London. Though not yet ready to recognise them as the Libyans' legitimate government (as the French already have), it is edging in this direction. Crucially, the administration does not think that Resolution 1973 prevents outsiders from arming the opposition. Mr Obama described the next steps like this:

As the bulk of our military effort ratchets down, what we can do – and will do – is support the aspirations of the Libyan people. We have intervened to stop a massacre, and we will work with our allies and partners as they're in the lead to maintain the safety of civilians. We will deny the regime arms, cut off its supply of cash, assist the opposition, and work with other nations to hasten the day when Qaddafi leaves power. It may not happen overnight, as a badly weakened Qaddafi tries desperately to hang on to power. But it should be clear to those around Qaddafi, and to every Libyan, that history is not on his side. With the time and space that we have provided for the Libyan people, they will be able to determine their own destiny, and that is how it should be.

It is a good case—and it was a good speech. If Colonel Qaddafi is swept quickly from power, or reduced to impotence in some bunker, nobody will care very much about the manner in which Mr Obama put together his alliance and campaign. It might indeed be remembered as an extraordinary foreign-policy success. After the rescue of Kuwait in 1991, however, the first President George Bush also expected Saddam Hussein's regime to collapse in short order. Mr Obama's team says the circumstances this time are entirely different. They had better be right.

Libyan Rebel Gains Could Be Fleeting, U.S. Military Says

By [DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK](#) and [KAREEM FAHIM](#)

TRIPOLI, Libya — As rebel forces backed by allied warplanes pushed toward one of Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#)'s most crucial bastions of support, the American military warned on Monday that the insurgents' rapid advances could quickly be reversed without continued coalition air support.

“The regime still vastly overmatches opposition forces militarily,” Gen. Carter F. Ham, the ranking American in the coalition operation, warned in an email message on Monday. “The regime possesses the capability to roll them back very quickly. Coalition air power is the major reason that has not happened.”

The sober assessment came as [President Obama](#) prepared to address the nation on Monday night about the American role in [Libya](#) amid continuing questions about its objectives and duration.

General Ham said there had been some “localized wavering” of government forces, notably in Ajdabiya, to the east, but so far only isolated instances of military or government officials defecting to the opposition. His remarks came after American and European bombs battered the coastal city of Surt — the rebels' next objective — in Colonel Qaddafi's tribal homeland on Sunday night, permitting the insurgents to advance toward the city's doorstep.

But news reports from Surt on Monday said there was no sign of a rebel takeover and the city seemed quiet. By late afternoon, dozens of rebel cars and trucks came streaming toward a checkpoint near Bin Jawwad, about 40 miles to the east of the front lines outside Surt. “There's a lot of resistance, the government is firing missiles, artillery,” said one rebel fighter. “Some were killed, many wounded.”

Nonetheless, a stream of civilian cars and some military vehicles were seen heading west from Surt toward Tripoli, 225 miles away.

A battle for Surt could help decide the war. Earlier, the rebels had recaptured two important [oil](#) refineries and a strategic port within 20 hours.

General Ham's warning, however, offered a somber counterpoint and underscored the essential role of Western airstrikes, now focused mainly on Colonel Qaddafi's ground troops, in reversing the rebels' fortunes. It also framed anew the question of how the poorly equipped and disorganized rebel forces might fare against Colonel Qaddafi's garrison in Surt, where air cover may be less useful.

Left open, as well, was the question of how the allies could justify airstrikes on Colonel Qaddafi's forces around Surt if, as seems to be the case, they enjoy widespread support in the city and pose no threat to civilians. On Monday, the Russian foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov, strongly criticized the allied attacks, saying “we consider that intervention by the coalition in what is essentially an internal civil war is not sanctioned by the [U.N. Security Council](#) resolution,” news agencies reported.

The resolution authorized “all necessary measures” to protect civilians in [Libya](#). It also called for an arms embargo that applies to the entire territory of Libya, which means that any outside supply of arms to the opposition would have to be covert.

Mr. Lavrov's criticism was echoed by the Libyan government. “This is the objective of the coalition now, it is not to protect civilians because now they are directly fighting against the armed forces,” said Khaled Kaim, the deputy foreign minister, at a news conference in the capital, Tripoli. “They are trying to push the country to the brink of a civil war.” At a news conference in Naples, Italy, Lt. Gen.

Charles Bouchard of Canada, who has been named to lead the [NATO](#) air campaign, said that the goals of the air campaign remained the same, “to protect and help the civilians and population centers under the threat of attack,” The Associated Press reported.

As Western warplanes again bombed sites around Tripoli and other Qaddafi strongholds, [NATO](#) agreed at a meeting in Brussels to [take over the mission](#). The decision effectively relieved the United States of leading the fight, and ended a week of squabbling.

Defense Secretary [Robert M. Gates](#) said the change, pushed by the United States, would allow the military to begin reducing its presence.

In interviews on Sunday, Mr. Gates and Secretary of State [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) left open how long the American commitment would be.

An official with the Pentagon said Sunday that it was already beginning to reduce the number of American warships involved in the operation. The official said that at least one of the Navy submarines that had fired Tomahawk missiles into [Libya](#) had left the area, and that a further naval pullout was likely.

Mr. Obama will be able to cite some early success, as the airstrikes have lifted the rebels back from the brink of defeat in the eastern city of Benghazi and enabled them to rush west along the coast past their farthest gains of their previous peak weeks ago.

After clashes with government forces near the town of Al Uqaylah, rebel fighters met little resistance on Sunday as they pushed from Ajdabiya past the [oil](#) towns of Brega and Ras Lanuf, recapturing the two important refineries. By the evening, they had pushed the front line west of Bin Jawwad, according to fighters returning from the front.

“There wasn’t resistance,” said Faraj Sheydani, 42, a rebel fighter interviewed on his return from the front. “There was no one in front of us. There’s no fighting.” However, there were reports of gasoline shortages, as the rapid advance stretched rebel supply lines.

In Tripoli, the explosions of about 10 large bombs near the city were heard downtown on Sunday night, followed by barrages of anti-aircraft fire and cascades of tracers. At a news conference, a short time later, Musa Ibrahim, a government spokesman, declined to comment on the exact location of the battle lines. But he argued that Western powers were now attacking the Libyan Army in retreat, a far cry from the [United Nations](#) mandate to establish a no-fly zone to protect civilians.

“Some were attacked as they were clearly moving westbound,” he said. “Clearly [NATO](#) is taking sides in this civil conflict. It is illegal. It is not allowed by the Security Council resolution. And it is immoral, of course.”

In western Libya, however, the rebel-held city of Misurata was still under siege by loyalist forces. By Sunday evening, rebels were again reporting street fighting in the center of the city as well as renewed shelling and mortar fire from Qaddafi tanks and artillery from west and northwest of the city.

On Monday, the government declared the city “liberated” and organized a bus trip there for Western journalists, who have been barred from reporting from the Misurata for weeks. But the rebels reported fighting on at least two fronts, and said that continuing allied airstrikes outside Misurata had destroyed a major ammunition depot that exploded in a blaze of light. It was still burning 13 hours after the initial blast, said Muhammad, a rebel spokesman there whose full name was withheld for his family’s safety.

Speaking over a satellite hook-up and hospital generator, he contradicted statements from the Qaddafi government that it had restored power and water to the city. He said that rebels had used a local generator to restore electricity to about half the city. But he said that

water remained cut off and that residents were using a small supply from a [desalination](#) facility there. The reports were impossible to confirm because of the news blackout.

In Tripoli on Sunday, most stores were closed. Usually busy streets were deserted. Officials said the port had been closed to ships carrying refined fuel as well as food and other goods. Gasoline was in increasingly short supply, and lines of cars at gas stations stretched for several blocks. Some motorists said they had turned out before dawn for a chance to fill up, or waited in line for more than two hours to reach the pump.

Residents also stood in long lines for bread at bakeries, mainly because the migrant workers Libyans rely on to bake and do other service jobs have fled the country.

The NATO agreement was announced Sunday evening by its secretary general, [Anders Fogh Rasmussen](#). He said that “NATO will implement all aspects of the [U.N.](#) resolution. Nothing more, nothing less.”

He said the decision would take “immediate effect,” but it may take up to two days for the transfer to be completed.

David D. Kirkpatrick reported from Tripoli, Libya, and Kareem Fahim from Ajdabiya, Libya. Reporting was contributed by Eric Schmitt and Mark Mazzetti from Washington, Steven Erlanger from Brussels and Alan Cowell from Paris.

Libyen-Konflikt Gaddafis Heimatstadt im Visier der Rebellen (**Impartial?**)

Aus Bengasi berichtet [Matthias Gebauer](#)



Mit Luftunterstützung des Westens rücken die Rebellen bei ihrem Kampf gegen Muammar al-Gaddafi erstaunlich schnell in Richtung Tripolis vor. Schon melden sie die Einnahme von Sirte - Gaddafis Geburtsort.

Die Angriffe sind von einer neuen Qualität. Die von den USA, Frankreich und Großbritannien angeführte internationale Koalition hat am späten Sonntagabend erstmals militärische Ziele in Sirte bombardiert. Sirte sei in der Hand der Rebellen, sagte ein Sprecher am Montag.

(...) In Bengasi feierten die Rebellen trotzdem bereits das Erreichen der symbolisch und strategisch wichtigen Stadt. Gegen fünf Uhr morgens fuhren Kolonnen der Kämpfer durch die Stadt und schossen über eine halbe Stunde Salven aus teilweise schweren Waffen in die Luft, an mehreren Kreuzungen feuerten auch Luftabwehrgeschütze.

Zuvor hatten die [Rebellen](#) bei ihrem Kampf gegen den verhassten Diktator [Muammar al-Gaddafi](#) ohne größeren Widerstand Hunderte Kilometer bis Ben Jawad, einem der wichtigsten Ölstandorte des Wüstenstaats, [vormarschieren können](#).

Sirte, rund 200 Kilometer weiter westlich an der Mittelmeerküste gelegen, ist der Geburtsort Gaddafis. Die Stadt gilt als Hochburg des Despoten, aber auch strategisch als eine der letzten Bastionen des angeschlagenen Machthabers gegen einen Vormarsch der Rebellen auf die Hauptstadt Tripolis.

Mit den Bombardements in Sirte geht das internationale Engagement in eine neue Phase über. In der Stadt gab es bisher keine Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Rebellen und Gaddafi-Einheiten oder auch nur politischen Protest. Dass die Koalition den Rebellen, weiterhin eine zusammengewürfelte Guerilla-Truppe ohne politische Führung, den Weg gen Westen quasi freischießt, markiert eine neue Qualität der Mission.

Westen unterstützt aktiv Gaddafis Sturz

Bislang hatten die Alliierten die Gaddafi-Einheiten beschossen, um Angriffe des Regimes auf die Zivilbevölkerung zu unterbinden - und sich damit weitgehend an die Uno-Resolution 1973 gehalten. Jetzt entwickelt sich der Kampfeinsatz des Westens immer mehr zur aktiven Unterstützung der Rebellen, um Gaddafi zu stürzen. Ohne die Angriffe, das gestehen die Regimegegner offen ein, wäre die Rückeroberung der bisherigen Gebiete nicht möglich gewesen.

LE TEMPS

Temps fort

Les ventes d'armes à Kadhafi dans le collimateur; L'embargo européen sur les ventes d'armes à Tripoli cache mal les compromissions passées

Richard Werly, Bruxelles

516 mots

4 mars 2011

[Le Temps](#)

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L'embargo européen contre la **Libye** cache mal les compromissions passées

Adopté lundi, l'embargo formel de l'**Union européenne** sur les ventes **d'armes** à la **Libye** aura bien du mal à faire oublier un chiffre: 14 de ses 27 pays membres exportaient encore des armes vers la **Libye** en 2009. Ce chiffre en dit long sur les compromissions entre les industriels de la défense et le régime Kadhafi, alors que celui-ci semble mener une violente contre-offensive. Grâce à un arsenal bien rempli.

Deux cent quatre-vingt-trois licences ont été délivrées en 2009 aux exportateurs, indique un rapport de l'UE, pour une valeur de plus de 343 millions d'euros. A titre de comparaison: la Russie a pour sa part signé avec Tripoli en 2010 un contrat portant sur 1,3 milliard d'euros. Le premier fournisseur **d'armes** européen à la **Libye** est Malte – pays de transit par excellence – suivi par l'Allemagne, l'Italie et la France. L'ex-groupe suisse Oerlikon-Bührle, racheté par l'autrichien Victory, dont les liens avec la **Libye** remontent aux années 1970, est aussi pointé du doigt. Ces équipements européens, affirment les spécialistes, sont ceux que les unités restées fidèles au régime utilisent ces jours-ci.

L'information n'est pas nouvelle. Plusieurs pays, comme le Royaume-Uni, sont mis en cause. Les autorités de Londres ont révoqué fin février plusieurs licences d'exportation après que l'ONG Campaign Against Arms Trade eut révélé la **vente** à la **Libye** d'équipements antiémeute et de fusils de haute précision.

Une polémique a aussi éclaté en Belgique au sujet des ventes en 2009 de l'entreprise wallonne FN Herstal portant sur 367 fusils d'assaut, 367 pistolets mitrailleurs P90, 22000 grenades pour fusils et un million de munitions. Autant d'équipements dont l'utilisation est aujourd'hui plus que problématique. Le président de la région wallonne, Rudy Demotte, a été l'un des premiers à réclamer un embargo européen. Le collectif français Contrôlez les armes veut maintenant porter l'affaire devant l'ONU.

Ces livraisons léthales n'étaient pas illégales. Elles résultaient de la levée de l'embargo de l'ONU envers la **Libye** survenue en octobre 2004, après l'abandon par celle-ci de son programme d'enrichissement nucléaire, sa renonciation au terrorisme et la destruction de son arsenal chimique et bactériologique (sur lequel beaucoup s'interrogent aujourd'hui). Problème: elles ont permis à Tripoli de moderniser ses équipements et de compléter les achats à des trafiquants.

La police italienne avait ainsi démantelé, en 2007, un réseau opérant à partir du nord de Rome. Il avait livré, via Malte, plus de 500000 fusils d'assaut AK-47 de fabrication chinoise et 10 millions de munitions destinées sans doute aux rebelles soudanais et tchadiens protégés par le régime, mais aussi aux sept brigades de sa garde prétorienne, placées sous l'autorité des fils Kadhafi.

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A War By Any Name

By [ROSS DOUTHAT](#)

Tonight, in a speech that probably should have been delivered before American planes began flying missions over North Africa, Barack Obama will try to explain to a puzzled nation why we are at war with Libya.

Not that the word “war” will pass his lips, most likely. In press briefings last week, our Libyan campaign was euphemized into a “kinetic military action” and a “time-limited, scope-limited military action.” (The online parodies were merciless: “Make love, not time-limited, scope-limited military actions!” “Let slip the muzzled canine unit of kinetic military action!”) Advertising tonight’s address, the White House opted for “the situation in Libya,” which sounds less like a military intervention than a spin-off vehicle for the famous musclehead from MTV’s “Jersey Shore.”

But by any name or euphemism, the United States has gone to war, and there are questions that the president must answer. Here are the four biggest ones:

What are our military objectives? The strict letter of the United Nations resolution we’re enforcing only authorizes the use of air power to protect civilian populations “under threat of attack” from Qaddafi’s forces. But we’re interpreting that mandate as liberally as possible: our strikes have cleared the way for a rebel counteroffensive, whose success is contingent on our continued air support.

If the rebels stall out short of Tripoli, though, how will we respond? With a permanent no-fly zone, effectively establishing a NATO protectorate in eastern Libya? With arms for the anti-Qaddafi forces, so they can finish the job? Either way, the logic of this conflict suggests a more open-ended commitment than the White House has been willing to admit.

Who exactly are the rebels? According to our ambassador to Libya, they have issued policy [statements](#) that include “all the right elements” — support for democracy, economic development, women’s rights, etc. According to The Los Angeles Times, they have filled what used to be Qaddafi’s prisons with “[enemies of the revolution](#)” — mostly black Africans, rounded up under suspicion of being mercenaries and awaiting revolutionary justice. According to The Daily Telegraph in London, their front-line forces include what one [rebel commander calls](#) the “patriots and good Muslims” who fought American forces in Iraq.

Perhaps Obama can clarify this picture. The rebels don’t need to be saints to represent an improvement on Qaddafi. But given that we’re dropping bombs on their behalf, it would be nice if they didn’t turn out to be Jacobins or Islamists.

Can we really hand off this mission? Officially, this is a far more multilateral venture than was, say, the invasion of Iraq. But as Foreign Policy’s Josh Rogin [points out](#), when it comes to direct military support, this war’s coalition is “smaller than any major multilateral operation since the end of the Cold War.” Officially, too, the United States is already stepping back into a supporting role, as NATO takes over the command. But as Wired’s Spencer Ackerman [argues](#), the difference between a “high” United States involvement and a “low” military commitment may prove more semantic than meaningful.

Obama has said our involvement will be measured in “days, not weeks.” With one week down already, is this really plausible? And anyway, how responsible is it to commit American forces to a mission and then suggest, as a senior administration official did last week, that “how it turns out is not on our shoulders”?

Is Libya distracting us from more pressing American interests? While we’ve been making war on Qaddafi’s tin-pot regime, our enemies in Syria have been shooting protesters, our allies in Saudi Arabia have been crushing dissidents, Yemen’s government is teetering, there’s been an upsurge of violence in Israel, and the Muslim Brotherhood seems to be moving smoothly into an alliance with the Egyptian military. Oh, and we’re still occupying Iraq and fighting a counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and trying to contain Iran.

Last week, The Atlantic’s Jeffrey Goldberg [rank-ordered](#) Mideast trouble spots that “demand more American attention than Libya.” He came up with six: Afghanistan-Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Yemen’s Qaeda havens, post-Mubarak Egypt and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

One can quibble with Goldberg's ordering but not his broader point. While we intervene in Libya, what is our Egypt policy? Our Yemen policy? Our Syria policy? With the entire Middle East in turmoil, does it make sense that Washington is focused so intently on who controls the highway between Ajdabiya and Surt?

It's clear that not everyone in this White House thinks so. Defending the intervention on "Meet the Press" on Sunday, [Robert Gates](#) let slip that he believes that Libya is not a "vital interest" of the United States.

President Obama's most pressing task tonight will be to explain why his secretary of defense is wrong — and why, appearances to the contrary, the potential payoff from our Libyan war more than justifies the risks.

Merkel Set to Lose Key German State

By [JUDY DEMPSEY](#)

BERLIN — In an astonishing shift in German politics, Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#)'s conservative Christian Democrats on Sunday seemed headed for a major defeat in a historic stronghold in southwestern [Germany](#), where the Green party appeared poised to head a state government for the first time, according to projections based on preliminary vote counts.

The nuclear calamity in Japan and Mrs. Merkel's subsequent reversal on nuclear power were thought to have played a key role in the elections in Baden-Württemberg, where the Christian Democrats have governed since 1953, before Mrs. Merkel, 56, was born.

Germans have a deep-seated aversion to nuclear power, and the damage at Fukushima Daiichi plant in Japan has galvanized opposition. On Saturday, more than 200,000 people took to the streets of four big German cities to protest against nuclear power. The news from Japan of soaring radiation levels led every radio and television newscast on Sunday.

After the catastrophe in Japan, Mrs. Merkel reversed a pro-nuclear policy adopted just last year and shut down temporarily seven of Germany's 17 nuclear plants. She apparently did not persuade voters.

If confirmed, the results would constitute the biggest blow to Mrs. Merkel since she became chancellor in 2005.

At Christian Democrat headquarters in Berlin, there was shock as the vote projections were announced. "This is very painful for us," said Annette Schwan, federal education and science minister.

Across town, the Greens' headquarters erupted in jubilation over their projected 25 percent of the vote. Winfried Kretschmann, 62, who now stands to head a Green-led coalition in Baden-Württemberg, spoke of "a historic change."

According to the vote projections, the Christian Democrats won the most votes — around 39 percent, down from 44.2 percent in 2006. Yet the weak showing of the Free Democrats, the pro-business party with which Mrs. Merkel governs nationally, left the conservatives no hope of forming the next state government.

The Free Democrats looked likely to squeak in to the state Legislature with just 5 percent of the vote, the minimum required. In 2006, they got 10.7 percent.

If the polls are confirmed, the Greens are in a comfortable position to head the a coalition with the Social Democrats in Baden-Württemberg, which has some 11 million inhabitants and is among the most prosperous and successful of Germany's 16 states.

The Greens were projected to win 24.8 percent of the vote, compared with 11.7 percent in 2006. The Social Democrats were forecast to garner 23.5 percent of the votes, little changed from 2006.

"If the results are confirmed, then this is a major breakthrough for the Greens," said Nils Diederich, political science professor at the Free University in Berlin.

"And it is huge blow to the chancellor," he added. "For the Greens, the big question is whether such success can be sustained on the federal level. Its opposition to [nuclear energy](#) and its environmental policies really did galvanize its support."

There was more good news for the Greens in neighboring Rhineland-Palatinate, where the Social Democrat premier Kurt Beck has governed with an absolute majority since 2006.

According to the vote projections, the Social Democrats suffered sizable losses, with its share of the vote falling from 45.6 percent in 2006 to 38 percent on Sunday.

The Greens, which failed to get elected to the regional parliament in 2006, won 16.8 percent of the vote. Mr. Beck is expected to ask the Greens to join a coalition with the Social Democrats.

The Free Democrats were voted out of the regional parliament in Rhineland-Palatinate, a further sign of their cratering popularity and failure to make a mark in federal government.

In a sign that Mrs. Merkel's party is likely to construe as hopeful, the Christian Democrats increased their share of the Rhineland-Palatinate vote to 36 percent from 32.8 percent five years ago. Analysts credited a good campaign by regional party leader Julia Klöckner, 38.

In Baden-Württemberg, by contrast, the Christian Democrats suffered not only from Mrs. Merkel's reversal on nuclear power — in a state with four nuclear plants — but from a lackluster and unfocused campaign.

The regional party leader and premier, Stefan Mappus, 44, was an unknown local politician until Mrs. Merkel chose him to replace Günther Oettinger, who went to Brussels as [European Union](#) commissioner for energy.

Last year, Mr. Mappus was slow to react to a ground swell of opposition to “Stuttgart 21,” a planned new railway station complex in the state capital that was billed as vital to speed up links between Germany and the rest of Europe.

The Greens led part of the opposition to the project, gaining profile while Mr. Mappus floundered.

But it was the combination of the crisis in Japan, and Mrs. Merkel's reaction, that swung opinion polls from the conservatives — who three weeks ago looked set to eke out a victory — to the Greens and the Social Democrats.

That decision was a U-turn for Mrs. Merkel. Last year she decided to overturn a decision, and a relevant law, by a former government of Social Democrats and Greens which aimed to shut all nuclear power plants by 2022. Mrs. Merkel prolonged them by an average of 12 years.

Her change of heart did not help Mr. Mappus, who was a staunch defender of nuclear power. He again seemed to flounder, saying at one point that one of the four nuclear plants in his state would be closed permanently. When that did not reverse the drifting polls, he reverted to support of nuclear power.

As soon as Mrs. Merkel shifted her stance, the Greens pounced on the change as a mere vote-getting move. Late last week, her economics minister, a Free Democrat, confirmed to a gathering of industry leaders that it was a tactical shift. That reinforced the impression of disarray in the national government. In Baden-Württemberg, voters were no longer prepared to trust the party that has ruled for 58 years.

Massive Setback for Merkel

Greens Score Big in Key German State

It is being hailed as the start of a new political era in Germany. The Green Party looks set to appoint its first state governor after Sunday's election in the state of Baden-Württemberg. The result is a huge setback for Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The Fukushima disaster has had, and will have, many consequences around the world. One of the more unlikely, however, appears to be the results of Sunday's election in the southwestern German state of Baden-Württemberg, where skepticism about nuclear power helped propel the Green Party to a historic victory over Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

The Greens doubled their share of the vote to 24.2 percent, according to preliminary results released by the state electoral commission. They are now likely to govern the state in a coalition with the center-left Social Democratic Party (SPD), which secured 23.1 percent of the vote, down 2 percent from the last election in 2006. In what would be a first for Germany, the Greens, as the senior partner in the coalition, will likely appoint the state governor.

The Green's leading candidate, Winfried Kretschmann, talked of a "historic electoral victory," while national Green Party co-leader Claudia Roth described the result as "the start of a new political era."

Although the CDU emerged as the strongest party, with 39 percent of the vote, down 5 percent from 2006, the conservatives and their preferred coalition partner, the business-friendly Free Democratic Party (FDP), do not have enough seats between them to form a coalition government. The election represents a particular setback for the FDP, who only got 5.3 percent of the vote, half of what they received in 2006 and barely squeaking past the 5 percent hurdle required for representation in the state parliament.

Setback for Merkel

The conservatives had already been suffering in the polls, but the Fukushima disaster effectively turned the state election into a [referendum on nuclear power](#), dealing a blow to the CDU and boosting the fortunes of the anti-nuclear Greens. The debate damaged incumbent CDU Governor Stefan Mappus, who had in the past been a vocal supporter of nuclear power. Merkel's [political U-turn on atomic energy](#) in the wake of the catastrophe in Japan also appears to have backfired. Voters apparently saw her sudden decision to temporarily take a number of older reactors off the grid as blatant electioneering.

Support for the CDU in the state had also suffered as a result of widespread opposition to Stuttgart 21, an expensive transportation and urban redevelopment project in the state capital. The unpopularity of that project also benefited the Greens, who had opposed the plans.

Sunday's result is a huge setback for Angela Merkel, whose CDU ruled the state for almost six decades. The result further reduces the number of seats the CDU and FDP have in the Bundesrat -- Germany's upper legislative chamber, which represents the interests of the states -- and will make it even harder for the national government to pass certain legislation.

SPD Keep Power in Rhineland-Palatinate

Voters in the western state of Rhineland-Palatinate also went to the polls on Sunday. There, the incumbent SPD experienced a disappointing result. They lost their absolute majority in the state parliament, with their share of the vote falling almost 10 points to 35.7 percent compared to 2006. The Greens tripled their votes, from 4.6 percent to 15.4 percent. The SPD and Greens will now probably form a coalition government, with the SPD as senior partner.

That election went slightly better for the CDU, who increased its share of the vote by 2.5 points to 35.3 percent. The result was humiliating for the CDU's coalition partner the FDP, however: They only secured 4.2 percent, down from 8.0 percent in 2006, and therefore missing the 5 percent hurdle. As a result, they will no longer be represented in the state parliament.

dgs - with wire reports

Every Revolution Is Revolutionary in Its Own Way

By SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE

London

A REVOLUTION resembles the death of a fading star, an exhilarating Technicolor explosion that gives way not to an ordered new galaxy but to a nebula, a formless cloud of shifting energy. And though every revolution is different, because all revolutions are local, in this uncertain age of Arab uprisings and Western interventions, as American missiles [bombard a defiant Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi](#) in Libya, as the ruler of Yemen [totters on the brink](#) and [Syrian troops fire on protesters](#), the history of revolution can still offer us some clues to the future.

The German sociologist Max Weber cited three reasons for citizens to obey their rulers: “the authority of the eternal yesterday,” or historical prestige; “the authority of the extraordinary personal gift of grace,” or the ruler’s charisma; and “domination by virtue of legality,” or order and justice. The “authority of the eternal yesterday” is especially important because in the Arab world even republics tend to be dynastic.

Before his ouster, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt was grooming hereditary heirs. Before his death in 2000, Hafez al-Assad, the long-reigning Syrian dictator, handed over power to his son Bashar. Colonel Qaddafi has long ruled through a phalanx of thuggish dauphins, each playing a different role — one the totalitarian enforcer, another, the pro-Western liberalizer — and each vying for the succession. Yemen’s Ali Abdullah Saleh similarly is safeguarded by special forces commanded by sons and nephews.

Yet “the life span of a dynasty corresponds to the life span of an individual,” wrote Ibn Khaldun, the brilliant 14th-century Islamic historian-statesman. All these Arab “monarchies” have rested on the prestige of a religion (Saudi Wahhabism or Iranian Twelver Shiism), a personality (in Iran, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the revolution; in Hosni Mubarak’s Egypt, the memory of the most popular Arab ruler since Saladin, President Gamal Abdel Nasser; in Saudi Arabia, the founder-king Ibn Saud) or a heredity link (Jordan’s King Abdullah II’s descent from Muhammad). But “prestige ... decays inevitably,” ruled Ibn Khaldun.

Revolutions are set off by dramatic events, yes — a stolen election in Iran in 2009, a self-immolation in Tunisia. But they also reflect longstanding economic depression, not to mention rising expectations and the temptations of comparison: the Internet meant Arab youth could now compare their own stunted rights with those of their Western counterparts. The generational difference between their wizened pharaohs and the Twitter-obsessed youth worsened the crisis, which may yet mark the end of the ancient paradigm of the Arab ruler, the wise strong sheik, el Rais, the Boss. A dictator who is regularly mocked by the young for his Goth-black dyed hair and surgically enhanced cheekbones, and whose entourage features as many nurses as generals, is in trouble — he has lost “the personal gift of grace.”

Such dictators are often so sclerotic that they do not even realize there is a revolution until it is upon them. In 1848, Prince Metternich, the Austrian chancellor, was so old that he literally could not hear the mobs outside his own palace. When the riots started, I imagine Colonel Qaddafi or King Hamad al-Khalifa of Bahrain had a conversation something like this one:

“So what is it? A riot?” asked King Louis XVI in Paris in 1789.

“No, Sire,” replied his confidant La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, “it is a revolution.”

Leaderless revolutions without organization have a magically spontaneous momentum that is harder to crush. Lenin had just reflected that the revolution would never happen in his lifetime when in February 1917, hungry crowds in Petrograd overthrew Nicholas II while the revolutionaries were abroad, exiled or infiltrated by the secret police.

This time, headless spontaneity has been aided by Facebook, which certainly accelerates the mobilization of crowds — and the transmission of Western culture, whether it concerns Charlie Sheen’s soliloquies or the joys of American democracy. But technology’s

effect is exaggerated: in 1848, the revolution that most resembles today's, uprisings spread from Sicily to Paris, Berlin, Vienna and Budapest in mere weeks without telephones, let alone Twitter. They spread through the exuberance of momentum and the rigid isolation of repressive rulers.

Once the crowds are in the streets, the ability to crush revolutions depends on the ruler's willingness and ability to shed blood. The more moderate the regimes, like the Shah's Iran in 1979 or Hosni Mubarak's Egypt, the easier to overthrow. The more brutal the police state, like Colonel Qaddafi's Libya, President Saleh's Yemen or President Assad's Syria, the tougher to bring down. Iran has brutally repressed its opposition — it helps to not be an American ally and to exclude the international news media, as it's much easier to massacre your people without being restrained by the State Department or CNN.

"Very pleasing commencements," wrote Edmund Burke, observer of the French Revolution's spiral from freedom to terror, "have often shameful, lamentable conclusions." Look at Lebanon's Cedar Revolution against Syria and its ally Hezbollah, which has ended with a Syrian-backed, Hezbollah-dominated government. The first success of revolution creates the exuberant dizziness of democratic freedom that we saw in Cairo and Benghazi. In Europe in 1848, in Russia in 1917, there were similarly exhilarating springs.

Often temporary leaders arise — think of Aleksandr Kerensky, the strutting Russian prime minister for some months before the Bolsheviks seized power — but every revolution has its figures who provide fig leaves for the hard men. Khomeini appointed Mehdi Bazargan, a democrat, as his prime minister, who ended up resigning during the hostage crisis.

The fiesta does not last long. The disorder, uncertainty and strife of a revolution make citizens yearn for stable authority, or they turn to radicalism. Certainly, extremists welcome this deterioration, as Lenin, that laconic dean of the university of revolutionology, expressed it with the slogan: "The worse, the better." (At that point, extreme solutions become more palatable: "How can one make a revolution without firing squads?" asked Lenin.)

At this stage, leadership becomes vital: Lenin personally drove the Bolshevik coup in October 1917. Khomeini was decisive in creating a Shiite theocracy in Iran in 1979 just as Nelson Mandela ensured a peaceful transition in South Africa. But there are no clear opposition leaders in Libya, Yemen or Syria: a ruthless security apparatus has long since decimated any such candidates.

In 1848, the democratic spring did not last long before outside intervention: Czar Nicholas I of Russia crushed the revolutions in the Habsburg Empire, earning him the soubriquet "the gendarme of Europe." The Saudi intervention against Shiite rebels in Bahrain suggests the Saudis are the gendarmes of the Gulf; in Yemen, President Saleh has also begged for Saudi help, which they have so far withheld. In Libya, of course, the reverse has happened: the West is backing the rebels against Colonel Qaddafi's onslaught. Each case is different; all revolutions are local.

Whatever happens next in the Arab world, it will not simply be a reversion to Mubarak-ish military pharaohism. After the upheavals of 1848, strange political hybrids, modern yet authoritarian, emerged from the uncertainty: first Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte, the so-called prince-president and later emperor, in France; and, later, in the 1860s, Otto von Bismarck in Prussia. In complex Egypt, the result of the Arab revolutions is likely to be a similar hybrid, a new democracy, with the military in a special role of Turkish-style guardianship; in repressed Libya, it may simply be a return to tribal rivalry.

Libya, strafed by British and American planes, may be in the headlines but it is a minor country: it is the destinies of the key three — Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Iran — that will decide everything. After all, Prince Metternich, the conservative Austrian who dominated Europe between the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the revolutions of 1848, said, "When Paris sneezes, Europe catches cold."

Lesser countries, however, can hold the key to major ones: Syria is the old Arab heartland. The uprising in Syria could encourage resurgent revolution in its patron, Iran, which faces the challenge of exploiting the uprisings that undermine American allies without succumbing to its own unrest. Change in Syria could also liberate Lebanon from Hezbollah; the fall of the Bahraini king could infect the Saudi monarchy — just as Nasser's overthrow of King Farouk in 1952 in Egypt led to the liquidation of the Iraqi monarchy a few years later. And we should always remember that however liberal these Facebooking revolutions may be, the rivalries between Shiite and Sunni are far more potent than Twitter and democracy.

What's next? When Zhou Enlai, the Chinese Communist prime minister, analyzed the French Revolution two centuries later, he declared that "it's too early to tell." We should remember that while enthusiasts have repeatedly cited the revolutions of 1989 to 1991 as the encouraging precedent for today's revolutions, how successful were those? Democracy flowered in Eastern Europe as well as Georgia and the Baltic countries, but most former Soviet republics are dictatorships like Uzbekistan or Belarus, or authoritarian like Putinist Russia.

No single American doctrine can or should fit this newly kaleidoscopic, multifaceted universe that is the Middle East from Iran to Morocco. We must realize this will be a long game, the grand tournament of the 21st century. We should protect innocent lives when we can — with limited airpower, not boots on the ground. We must analyze which countries matter to us strategically, and after the Facebook party dies down and the students exit the streets, figure out who is really controlling events in the places important to us.

The wisest judgments belong to statesmen who knew much about crushing and making revolutions. "Old Europe is at the beginning of the end," reflected the ultraconservative Metternich as he was beset by revolutions, "but New Europe however has not yet even begun its existence, and between the End and the Beginning, there will be Chaos." Lenin understood that the ultimate question in each revolution is always the unfathomable alchemy of power: who controls whom. Or as he put it so succinctly: "Who whom?"

Simon Sebag Montefiore is the author of the forthcoming "Jerusalem: The Biography."

Coup de frein mondial sur l'énergie nucléaire

Par [Fabrice Nodé-Langlois](#)

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Le 20 mars, devant la centrale nucléaire de Biblis dans la Hesse, en Allemagne. Crédits photo : ARNE DEDERT/AFP

L'accident de Fukushima contraint de nombreux pays à reconsidérer leur stratégie dans l'atome civil. L'Allemagne a déjà pris des décisions drastiques. D'autres s'interrogent.

Quoi qu'en pense le gouvernement français, qui jugeait «indécents» de lancer le débat sur l'arrêt du nucléaire dans les premiers jours de **l'après-tsunami**, la question s'est très rapidement imposée dans le monde entier. À commencer par **l'Allemagne** : revenant sur sa décision de prolonger les centrales, Angela Merkel a annoncé, quatre jours seulement après le séisme, la fermeture pour trois mois au moins des sept plus vieux réacteurs allemands. Samedi, plus de 200 000 Allemands ont défilé pour réclamer l'arrêt de toutes les installations. Outre-Rhin, le nucléaire est immédiatement devenu un enjeu électoral majeur. Et le phénomène pourrait faire tache d'huile.

Le poids de l'opinion

L'**Italie**, qui s'apprêtait à relancer son programme nucléaire arrêté il y a plus de vingt ans, a décrété un moratoire d'un an. Le temps d'évaluer les retombées de Fukushima. De l'autre côté des Alpes, la **Suisse** se dit prête à étudier tous les scénarios, de la poursuite de son programme à l'arrêt pur et simple. «Le 10 mars, veille du tsunami, la relance du nucléaire, aux États-Unis, en Espagne, en Grande-Bretagne, en Italie, avait le vent en poupe», rappelle William Ramsay, directeur du programme énergie à l'Institut français des relations internationales (Ifri). Les pays émergents se bousculaient à Vienne, à l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA) pour solliciter de l'aide afin de démarrer leur programme atomique. Parfois en partant de rien, sinon une poignée de physiciens. Sur la soixantaine d'États intéressés, une quinzaine sont considérés comme sérieux par l'agence de Vienne.

Quel sera l'impact de Fukushima sur les décisions de pays régulièrement secoués de séismes ? «Je pense que les onze ou douze candidats sérieux vont y aller, car, au bout du compte, seule une chose importe : la sécurité des approvisionnements énergétiques», pronostique un ancien de l'AIEA qui préfère rester anonyme. «Ils verront que le tsunami a fait 25 000 morts et, je pense, les radiations guère plus de 5 (aucun pour le moment)», poursuit-il. Les pays en voie de développement n'ont «pas une opinion publique très éduquée, qui se soucie véritablement des questions de radiations. Je ne vous dis pas ça par cynisme, mais parce que le rapport sur Three-Mile Island (centrale américaine dont le cœur a partiellement fondu en 1979) avait conclu que la conséquence la plus grave avait été le sentiment anxiogène exacerbé dans l'opinion américaine à propos du nucléaire». Dans ces pays émergents, les besoins en énergie sont tels par ailleurs qu'il semble difficile de faire totalement l'impasse sur l'atome. C'est surtout le cas de la **Chine**, mais Pékin ne donnera pas de blanc-seing au nucléaire : une inspection à grande échelle de la sûreté des installations vient d'être décidée. Plus ennuyeux pour l'industrie dont la Chine promettait d'être le client le plus actif dans les années à venir : tout projet d'approbation d'une nouvelle centrale a été suspendu.

Dans les démocraties, l'évolution de l'opinion sera déterminante pour les choix énergétiques. Avec obligation pour les gouvernements de ne pas laisser la peur s'installer. Aux **États-Unis**, Barack Obama a rapidement demandé une «étude complète» sur la situation du secteur. Mais déjà, certains opérateurs et certaines autorités locales s'interrogent.

Pour Jean-Pierre Maulny, directeur adjoint de l'Institut des relations internationales et stratégiques (Iris), le seul moyen de rassurer l'opinion sur la sûreté du nucléaire est d'adopter de véritables normes internationales, garanties par une autorité dédiée. «Il n'y aura jamais d'autorité suprannationale», rétorque William Ramsay, de l'Ifri.

L'autre clef du débat sera purement économique : la hausse du coût du kilowattheure atomique induit par le renforcement des mesures de sécurité pourrait faire réfléchir à deux fois certains opérateurs, ou certains pays disposant d'autres ressources.

Schäubles Beirat kritisiert Euro-Rettungspaket

Die Wirtschaftsberater von Finanzminister Schäuble kritisieren das neue Euro-Rettungspaket scharf: Es verfestige eine Fehlsteuerung in der Finanzpolitik und auf den Kapitalmärkten, schreiben sie dem Minister.

Von Kerstin Schwenn, Berlin
27. März 2011

Die Wirtschaftsberater von Bundesfinanzminister Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) warnen vor dem neuen Euro-Rettungspaket. Der Wissenschaftliche Beirat des Ministeriums hält die jüngsten Beschlüsse des EU-Gipfels für „besorgniserregend“. In einem Brief an Schäuble äußern die Wissenschaftler des Beirats die Befürchtung, die Vereinbarungen auf dem EU-Gipfel könnten die Entwicklung des Euro-Raums beeinträchtigen und Deutschland sowie andere Geberländer überfordern.

Der auf Dauer angelegte Fonds soll einschließlich Bürgschaften mit 700 Milliarden Euro ausgestattet werden. Davon sind 190 Milliarden Euro Bareinlagen, von denen auf Deutschland von 2013 an 22 Milliarden Euro entfallen. Der Rettungsschirm verfestige die „Fehlsteuerung in der Finanzpolitik und auf den Kapitalmärkten“, weil Länder mit maroden Staatsfinanzen Hilfen von gesunden bekämen, heißt es weiter. Das nehme der Politik den Anreiz, Schulden- und Finanzkrisen vorzubeugen. Die Professoren bemängeln außerdem, dass die Beteiligung privater Gläubiger wie Banken durch Forderungsverzicht im Fall einer drohenden Staatsinsolvenz nicht zwingend vorgeschrieben sei. Die Umschuldung eines Landes setze in jedem Fall eine politische Einigung im Euro-Raum voraus. Schuldenschnitte seien aber politisch nicht erwünscht. „Damit ist die Glaubwürdigkeit des Verfahrens von vornherein erschüttert.“



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„Besorgniserregend“: Der Wissenschaftliche Beirat des Finanzministeriums kritisiert die jüngsten Beschlüsse des EU-Gipfels

Schäubles Sprecher bezeichnete die Kritik der Beiratsmitglieder am Sonntag als „unabhängige Stimme im Rahmen der Diskussion der europäischen Staatsschuldenkrise“. Aus Sicht des Bundesfinanzministeriums fehlten jedoch wichtige Aspekte in der Betrachtung. So übersehe die Stellungnahme, dass gerade die Schlussfolgerungen der Staats- und Regierungschefs des Euro-Raums vom 11. März einen großen Schritt hin zu einer nachhaltigen Finanzpolitik in Europa darstellten. „Durch die Konditionalität der Hilfen und durch die Stärkung des Stabilitäts- und Wachstumspakts sowie der wirtschaftspolitischen Überwachung und durch den Pakt für den Euro sind die Antworten gefunden worden, um eine übermäßige Belastung der Steuerzahler zu verhindern“, sagte der Sprecher des Finanzministeriums. Eine Belastung der hiesigen Steuerzahler werde gerade dadurch vermieden, dass die hilfeschenden Staaten durch strenge Vorgaben für ihre Haushaltspolitik wieder auf eigene Füße gestellt würden. „Nicht Mutmaßungen über Schuldenschnitte, sondern gemeinsame Anstrengungen für solide Staatsfinanzen sind das Gebot der Stunde.“ Bisher hat nur Irland direkt aus dem Fonds Hilfen erhalten, für Griechenland wurde ein eigenes Rettungspaket geschnürt.

Der Bundesverband Deutscher Banken verteidigte die starke deutsche Beteiligung am Rettungsschirm. „Deutschland ist ein Exportland und profitiert besonders von einem stabilen Euro. Auch deshalb greift unser Land noch einmal tief in die Tasche und gibt Garantien, um eine Pleite angeschlagener Länder zu verhindern“, schreibt Verbandspräsident Andreas Schmitz in der „Bild am Sonntag“.

Text: F.A.Z.

Social Ills Feed Rise of Far-Right Party in France

By MAÏA DE LA BAUME and [STEVEN ERLANGER](#)

HÉNIN-BEAUMONT, France — The far-right National Front, under the new leadership of Marine Le Pen, is sending shivers through [France](#)'s political world in the maneuvering for the 2012 presidential elections. Ms. Le Pen, a more telegenic and less cheerfully divisive figure than her father, [Jean-Marie Le Pen](#), is getting around 20 percent in early opinion polls, putting her about even with the main parties of the right and left.

The party's strength depends on the general dislike for mainstream politicians. But it also feeds off the social unease felt by people in poor, formerly industrialized cities like this one, near Lille in northern France. Jobs are scarce, immigrants are many, and France seems submerged in a larger world of competition from China, India, Brazil and even the new member states of the [European Union](#).

Ms. Le Pen has played down criticism of the Jews, a hallmark of her father, in favor of criticizing Muslims and their supposed unwillingness to assimilate into French society and accept French values, including secularism. She has also attacked the power of the European Union and its "shared sovereignty," presenting Brussels as an enemy and vowing to pull France out of the euro, restoring the franc.

In last Sunday's first round of municipal elections for local councils, the National Front did well nationally, aided by a record abstention rate of more than 55 percent. The party got some 15 percent of the votes, up from 12 percent in 2004, while President [Nicolas Sarkozy](#)'s Union for a Popular Movement got about 17 percent, and the Socialists, who are traditionally strong locally, got about 25 percent.

Here in this city of 26,000, however, the National Front got 43.2 percent, beating even the Socialists, with 21 percent, who used to dominate the industrialized north. The local front leader, Steeve Briois, 38, is likely to win the party's first seat in a local council in the department of Pas-de-Calais, a former coal-mining area near the Belgian border. In Hénin-Beaumont, unemployment hovers around 16 percent.

Mr. Briois was born in nearby Seclin to a Communist father, but became a member of the National Front at 15. "I've converted everyone in my family," he said. "They all have their party membership cards."

Mr. Briois retains youthful looks and a cheery smile, but also has a talent for organization. The party has built close ties with the population through door-to-door visits, regular meetings, and a willingness to listen and to address people's problems directly, including concerns over affordable housing and tensions with Muslims, who came to the area from northern Africa after World War II to work in the factories and mines.

"We've been presented as an extremist, racist, anti-Semitic, sexist movement that denies the Holocaust," Mr. Briois said. "We aren't any of that."

Mohamed Zouaoui, an Algerian-born salesman of beauty products, begs to differ. "Our children feel the racism around them," he said. The last time he had drinks at a bar here, "People stared at us as if we were preparing to bomb the place," he said.

People are ignorant about Islam, Mr. Zouaoui, 40, said. "We aren't delinquents or thugs, but Islam is a religion that scares people."

Hénin-Beaumont has its own mosque and several halal fast-food restaurants and butchers, and at the weekly market head scarves and couscous vendors are all around. According to studies by France's national statistical bureau, Insee, Pas-de-Calais has among the highest percentages in France of Algerian and Morocco citizens.

But as the immigrant population has grown and jobs have disappeared, the mood has shifted among the residents here, built on anger over unemployment, resentment of state aid to the Muslims among them, and disappointment with mainstream politicians.

Marion Rohart, a 25-year-old cashier, used to think that Jean-Marie Le Pen, the longtime leader of the National Front, was outmoded and essentially harmless, because he was beyond the pale. “He was too provocative,” said Ms. Rohart, a regular voter for Mr. Sarkozy’s party.

But when she saw a group of Muslims spitting on some of her homosexual friends, she said, she decided to vote National Front, known in French as the “F.N.,” at least in the local elections. The party was alone in Hénin-Beaumont in denouncing the “uncontrollable growth” of the Muslim population, she said.

“We don’t feel at home here anymore,” Ms. Rohart said. “Now, it’s time for the F.N. to win.”

When Marine Le Pen recently compared crowds of Muslims praying in the streets outside overcrowded mosques to the Nazi occupation of France, Ms. Rohart said she was correct.

Chantal Petit owns a restaurant, El Piccolo, with her husband, Didier. “Say something to an Arab who throws a tissue in the street,” she said bitterly, “he’ll go to a police officer right away.”

Here, she said, the National Front “always defends the little people” like herself, Mrs. Petit said. And the party’s representatives are smart and polite, she said. “Contrary to other politicians here, they’re extremely well-behaved,” she said. “They’re high-level intellectuals and extremely competent.”

Ms. Le Pen has made Hénin-Beaumont a party stronghold after she did so well in parliamentary elections four years ago, winning 29 percent of the city’s vote in the first round and 24.4 percent over all in the constituency. She lost in the runoff when Mr. Sarkozy’s party voted against her party, but her result — 44.5 percent in the city and 41.7 percent over all — gave her national credibility.

But in this election, the ruling party has been divided over its advice to voters for the second round if the choice is between the National Front and the Socialists. Mr. Sarkozy has said his party supporters should vote for neither the Socialists nor the National Front, while his prime minister, [François Fillon](#), has encouraged them to vote against the National Front.

“If Hénin-Beaumont has become F.N. territory,” said Bernard Dolez, a political scientist, “it is mostly because of Marine Le Pen.”

Ms. Le Pen was clever enough, Mr. Dolez said, to impose her views on a city where the Socialists were divided and the Union for a Popular Movement almost invisible.

She has picked up support among Sarkozy supporters like Ms. Rohart and Bernard Lefrère, 62, a retired teacher. “She’s right on security and [immigration](#),” Mr. Lefrère said. But he said he has his doubts about her stand on the euro: “Her will to get back to the franc scares me.”

Mr. Zouaoui takes a longer view. Life is hard in Hénin-Beaumont and people are afraid for their futures, which is why they vote for the National Front.

“If we give these people something to eat tomorrow,” he said, “they will forget about racism.”

Rebellen erobern Adschdabija / Steinmeier kritisiert Frankreich

Die Aufständischen haben die strategisch wichtige Stadt Adschdabija zurückerobert, die über eine Woche von Gaddafis Truppen belagert worden war. Der amerikanische Präsident Obama sagte, die Luftabwehr Libyens sei ausgeschaltet und Gaddafis Truppen rückten nicht weiter gegen die Rebellen vor.

FAZ 26. März 2011

Libysche Rebellen haben die strategisch wichtige Stadt Adschdabija im Osten des Landes von Regierungstruppen zurückerobert. Soldaten von Machthaber Muammar al Gaddafi hielten am Samstag lediglich noch das westliche Stadttor in ihrer Gewalt. Vier Panzer der Gaddafi-Truppen wurden zerstört. Ein Rebellen Sprecher bezeichnete den Ort als Geisterstadt. „Alles wurde von unseren Kräften vergangene Nacht zerstört“, sagte er. „Nun sind nur noch Leichen in der Stadt zu sehen und Familien, die nicht wissen, wohin sie sollen.“

Adschdabija war mehr als eine Woche von Gaddafis Truppen belagert worden, die vor dem Eingreifen der internationalen Koalition am 19. März kurz davor standen, die auf dem Weg nach Benghasi gelegene Stadt endgültig unter ihre Kontrolle zu bringen. Ein Kämpfer sagte der Nachrichtenagentur dapd, der östliche Zugang zur Stadt sei in der Nacht und der westliche am Morgen nach Luftangriffen auf Truppen Muammar al Gaddafis in die Hand der Rebellen gefallen. „Ganz Adschdabija ist frei“, sagte Sadawi.



Aufständische auf einem zerstörten Panzer in Adschdabija

(...)

Steinmeier: Frankreich nur von nationalen Motiven getrieben

Der SPD-Fraktionsvorsitzende im Bundestag, Frank-Walter Steinmeier kritisiert in der F.A.S. die Haltung der Franzosen im Libyen-Einsatz scharf. „Ich habe in meinem politischen Leben noch nie eine Entscheidung über einen Militäreinsatz der internationalen Gemeinschaft gesehen, der so sehr von nationalen Motiven eines Staates getragen und getrieben war wie dieser“, sagte Steinmeier der „Frankfurter Allgemeinen Sonntagszeitung“. „Frankreich, das intensive Beziehungen zu Libyen und zu Gaddafi unterhielt, hat das Bedürfnis gehabt, das eigene Tun mit diesem Militäreinsatz zu bemänteln“, sagte der frühere Außenminister. Das seien keine guten Voraussetzungen für eine Entscheidung im UN-Sicherheitsrat gewesen.

Für den Einsatz habe es „so gut wie keine Vorplanung“ gegeben. „Die Ziele des Einsatzes sind bis heute unklar“, bemängelte Steinmeier. Der Bundesregierung warf Steinmeier vor, dass sie die Franzosen gewähren ließ und nicht den intensiven Kontakt mit den Amerikanern gesucht habe, um diese Resolution im Sicherheitsrat zu verhindern und auf verschärfte Sanktionen zu setzen. „Der große Fehler der Regierung liegt darin, dass sie sich um Wahlkampf gekümmert hat und gehofft hat, dass die Alliierten schon irgendwie auf ihrer Seite sein würden, statt aktiv zu werden, um eine solche Abstimmung im Sicherheitsrat zu vermeiden“, sagte Steinmeier der F.A.S.

FAZ

Der bescheidene Euro-Kompromiss: Weiche Regeln, wenig Haftung!

VON: Mark Schieritz DATUM: 23.3.2011 - 16:25 Uhr



Der neue Schirm ist gespannt: Italiens Finanzminister Giulio Tremonti, EZB-Vize Vitor Constancio und den Finanzministern Griechenlands und Frankreichs sowie EU-Kommissar Olli Rehn (von links nach rechts)

Das war sie also, die groß angekündigte Reform der europäischen Währungsunion. Alle wichtigen Beschlüsse sind gefasst, die Staats- und Regierungschefs dürften sie auf ihrem Treffen in Brüssel am Donnerstag dieser Woche nur noch abnicken.

Das Ergebnis wird den Süden enttäuschen, weil er die Hoffnung auf einen innereuropäischen Länderfinanzausgleich begraben muss. Zwar wird ein dauerhafter Rettungsfonds eingerichtet, aus dem Krisenstaaten mit Finanzhilfen unterstützt werden. Doch genau wie sein Pendant auf globaler Ebene, der Internationale Währungsfonds, verschenkt er sein Geld nicht, sondern vergibt Kredite, die zurückgezahlt werden müssen und die an strenge Auflagen gekoppelt sind. Und genau wie die Welt insgesamt keine Transferunion ist, nur weil es den Weltwährungsfonds gibt, so wird auch Europa keine solche sein, nur weil es den Europäischen Währungsfonds gibt.

Krisenfonds

Er soll die Euro-Zone auf Dauer zusammen halten: der Europäische Stabilitätsmechanismus (ESM). Der neue Krisenfonds, auf den sich die EU-Finanzminister geeinigt haben, soll den bisherigen Hilfsfonds EFSF Mitte 2013 ablösen. Er enthält eine Kapitalbasis von 700 Milliarden Euro, von denen maximal 500 Milliarden Euro an Not leidende Staaten verliehen werden können. Im Gegensatz zum alten EFSF wird der neue Fonds mit einem Grundkapital in Höhe von 80 Milliarden Euro ausgestattet. Rund die Hälfte der Summe soll bis zum Jahr 2013 zur Verfügung stehen, der Rest in den kommenden drei Jahren. Hilfen aus diesem Fonds werden nur im Notfall und mit einem Sparversprechen geleistet. Über die Höhe und Bedingungen von Notkrediten bestimmen die Finanzminister im Euro-Raum einstimmig, alle weiteren Entscheidungen werden mit qualifizierter Mehrheit gefällt.

Beteiligung der Länder

Wer wie viel in den neuen Fonds einzahlt, darüber entscheidet der Schlüssel der Europäischen Zentralbank (EZB). Deutschland trägt rund 27 Prozent der Bareinzahlungen, das sind rund 22 Milliarden Euro. Hinzu kommen Garantien und Bürgschaften in Höhe von 168,3 Milliarden Euro. Frankreich beteiligt sich mit rund 16,3 Milliarden an Bareinzahlungen, Italien mit 14,3 Milliarden. Streit gibt es noch darüber, in welchen Raten vor allem die Deutschen ihre Einzahlungen leisten. Angela Merkel will, dass die Barzahlungen auf fünf Raten bis zum Jahr 2016 gestreckt werden, um die Lasten für den heimischen Haushalt geringer zu halten.

Private Gläubiger

Ab dem Jahr 2013 werden alle Anleihen der Euro-Staaten eine Klausel enthalten. Diese sieht Regelungen für den Fall vor, dass ein Land zahlungsunfähig wird. Die Laufzeit der Anleihen kann in einem solchen Fall verlängert, ein Teilverzicht der Gläubiger vereinbart werden. Die privaten Gläubiger – also unter anderem Banken und Versicherungen – werden aber weiterhin nicht automatisch an den Kosten einer Staatspleite beteiligt.

Den Norden wird das Resultat ebenfalls enttäuschen, weil in Europa weiterhin an jeder Wegbiegung die Politiker das Sagen haben. Ja, es werden einige Vorschriften verschärft, und die Abstimmung der Wirtschaftspolitik wird ein wenig verbessert. Doch Schuldensünder werden auch künftig nicht automatisch bestraft, und private Gläubiger tragen auch nicht automatisch einen Teil der Kosten einer Staatspleite.

Angela Merkel hat verhindert, dass Europa eine Haftungsgemeinschaft wird. Nicolas Sarkozy hat verhindert, dass es sich strenge Regeln gibt.

Die Kritik an Madame und Monsieur Non wird nicht auf sich warten lassen, doch mehr als ein kleiner gemeinsamer Nenner ist in Europa derzeit nicht möglich. Die Politiker scheuen sich, nationale Souveränität aufzugeben, und die Bürger wollen nicht zu viel internationale Solidarität.

Dabei werden die Staaten Europas künftig wirtschaftlich noch stärker voneinander abhängen als bisher schon. Sollte sich in Irland, Griechenland und Portugal, dem nächsten Kandidaten für ein Hilfsprogramm, die Wirtschaft erholen, werden die Deutschen ihr Geld zurückerhalten. Mit Zins und Zinseszins. Erklären sich die Krisenstaaten dagegen für bankrott, ist das Geld weg. Anders gesagt: Misslingt die Rettung, bezahlen wir für den Euro. Gelingt sie, verdienen wir an ihm.

Von der wirtschaftlichen zur politischen Union – das war der Traum der Gründerväter der EU. Doch vorerst wird Europa eine Gemeinschaft unabhängiger Staaten bleiben. Damit liegt die Zukunft des Euro in den Händen der einzelnen Länder. Er wird überleben, wenn alle so wirtschaften, wie es die Mitgliedschaft in einer Währungsgemeinschaft erfordert. Er wird untergehen, wenn jeder auf seinen eigenen kurzfristigen Gewinn schaut.

- QUELLE: DIE ZEIT, 24.3.2011 Nr. 13

Es gibt keinen halben Krieg

Was in Libyen als humanitäre Mission begann, weitet sich zum Regime-Wechsel aus. Doch im Bürgerkrieg eine neue Ordnung herzustellen, ist schwer. Ein Kommentar

• VON: Josef Joffe DATUM: 25.3.2011 - 17:47 Uhr

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Libysche Rebellen bereiten sich auf den Kampf gegen Regierungstruppen in der Nähe der Stadt Adschabija vor

Als *mission creep* wird derzeit bisweilen bezeichnet, was in Libyen geschieht. Es bedeutet: die schleichende Ausweitung der Kriegsziele. Frankreich aber "kriecht" in Libyen nicht, sondern es stürmt. Der französische Außenminister Alain Juppé hat gerade Geduld angemahnt; "Sie können nicht erwarten", erzählte er den Medien, "dass wir unsere Ziele in nur fünf Tagen verwirklichen." Welche Ziele? "Die Zerstörung von Gadhafis Militärmacht", das könnte "Wochen" dauern.

Gadhafis Armee dezimieren? Das ist sieht die Resolution des Sicherheitsrates nicht vor. Sie spricht nur von Flugverbot, Waffenembargo und "Schutz von Zivilisten" sowie von "Regionen", die von ihnen bewohnt werden. In Amerika fragt der Chef der Republikaner-Opposition, John Boehner, deshalb den Präsidenten: "Ist es ein akzeptables Ergebnis, wenn Gadhafi nach Ende der militärischen Anstrengung an der Macht bleibt?"

Das war vorauszusehen, weil ein reines Flugverbot dem Diktator zwar seine beste Waffe aus der Hand schlägt, aber nichts an seiner Überlegenheit am Boden ändert. Die libysche Luftwaffe existiert praktisch nicht mehr. Doch der Würgegriff um Misarata, Libyens drittgrößter Stadt, hat sich nicht gelockert. Ergo müssen seine Panzer, seine Artillerie, seine mechanisierten Streitkräfte ins Visier – genau, was Franzosen, Amerikaner und andere schon tun.

Die Flugzeuge der Alliierten "suchen weiter nach Gelegenheiten, Bodentruppen anzugreifen", sagt ein ungenannt bleibender Offizieller. Ein Mitglied des Nationalen Sicherheitsrates der USA redet offen von einem "Strategiewechsel". Dessen Ziel sei es, "eine bevorstehende humanitäre Katastrophe zu verhindern, ein mögliches Massaker von Tausenden, wenn nicht gar Zehntausenden von Menschen in den großen Bevölkerungszentren".

Das ist ein weites Feld, wenn eine Armee gegen einen Gegner kämpft, der gestern noch aus Handwerkern und Studenten bestand und heute mit abtrünnigen Offizieren der Gadhafi-Armee durchsetzt ist. Sind bewaffnete Zivilisten noch immer Zivilisten? Wer sind diese Leute? Wir wissen es noch immer nicht, und schon machen Gerüchte die Runde, dass inzwischen auch Al-Qaida-Kämpfer mitmischen.

Derweil geht der Streit über die Führung der Kampagne weiter. Die Türkei hat sich gedreht und befürwortet nun einen Nato-Oberbefehl, um das Waffenembargo durchzusetzen, kritisiert aber gleichzeitig Art und Weise des Luftkrieges. Die Amerikaner wollen die Führung so schnell wie möglich loswerden. Frankreich aber fordert eine "sekundäre" Rolle für die Nato.

Der Sicherheitsrat denkt, der Krieg lenkt. Er folgt seinen eigenen Gesetzen. An der strategischen Logik lässt sich kaum rütteln. Wer die humanitäre Pflicht erfüllen will, muss den Stärkeren entmachten. Das beginnt mit einem Flugverbot und

weitet sich unaufhörlich aus – auf die Bodentruppen, auf das Regime selber. Und der Appetit wächst mit dem Erfolg. Ursprünglich wollten die US-Truppen in Südkorea (1950-1953) nur den Aggressor aus dem Norden zurücktreiben. Dann der *mission creep* – die Wiedervereinigung der beiden Halbstaaen – was die Chinesen in den Krieg zog und die Amerikaner zum Schluss 50.000 Soldaten kostete – von der Zivilbevölkerung ganz zu schweigen.

Zitieren wir zum Schluss Charles A. Horner, den US-Luftwaffengeneral a.D., der den Luftkrieg über Irak leitete: "Bislang hat die Kampagne gegen Gadhafi nicht das gewünschte Resultat gebracht. Der Beginn dieses Krieges war von Halbheiten geprägt. Jetzt müssen wir uns auf unsere verbleibende Kräfte besinnen."

Er hat Recht. Es gibt keinen halben Krieg. Nur sieht das UN-Mandat bloß einen "Viertel"-Krieg vor. Es geht aber nicht nur um Legitimierung, sondern um den Zusammenhang einer Koalition, die sich in New York auf den kleinsten gemeinsamen Nenner geeinigt hat. Wackelig von Anfang an, wird die platzen, je länger der Krieg dauert, je weiter sich die Kriegsziele ausdehnen – gut für Gadhafi.

Und wenn Gadhafi verliert? Wird die Koalition dann die Verlierer vor der Wut der Rebellen schützen? Das müsste sie; das gebietet die humanitäre Pflicht. Wer in einen Bürgerkrieg eingreift, muss eine halbwegs tolerable Ordnung hinterlassen. Und das ist schwerer als aus 8000 Meter Höhe eine Präzisionswaffe auf einen Panzer in der Wüste abzufeuern. Möge Juppé Recht behalten: "Ich kann nicht sagen, wie lange es dauern wird." Aber "solange wie nötig".

BBC 25 March 2011 Last updated at 14:36 GMT

Is Libya Sarkozy's De Gaulle moment?

By Hugh Schofield **BBC News, Paris**



Even the president's detractors admit that he has been impressive on Libya

If the art of politics is about seizing the moment, then the French president Nicolas Sarkozy has certainly grabbed this one.

First of all, he went out on a limb in officially recognising the Libyan opposition.

Then he corralled the international coalition, pushed through the no-fly UN resolution, and bombed Muammar Gaddafi's tanks outside Benghazi.

A week later, though, military leadership of the alliance has now passed to the US and Nato - France still carries a kind of moral aura thanks to its early championing of the cause.

It's the sort of moment that makes the French people feel good about themselves.

This is a country with a very high view of its own mission in the world. But the opportunities for gunboat humanitarianism are not frequent, and up to now it has been Washington that has led the way.

This time it is France doing what the French believe France is supposed to do, thanks to a president who may be impetuous - but at least knows how to act.

Impressive

So is this, as some are saying, Mr Sarkozy's De Gaulle moment?

A chance for him to transcend the petty bickering of domestic politicians, and place France back where it belongs among the pantheon of nations?



Mr Sarkozy's role has been acknowledged on the streets of Benghazi

And if it is, does that mean that his own political fortunes are saved, and that he can start planning for next year's presidentials with a renewed sense of hope?

The initial omens are good.

French intervention in Libya is supported by all the main political parties, with the exception of the Communists and the National Front.

In the nation as a whole, some 66% are in favour, according to a poll published on 23 March. Two weeks ago - before Mr Sarkozy moved into top gear - the same proportion was actually against French policy.

Even the president's enemies have been forced to admit that he has been impressive.

[Continue reading the main story](#)

“Start Quote

In advance of all the rest, he launched a war of the just”

End Quote Christophe Barbier L'Express

Bernard-Henri Levy, the Socialist-voting celebrity philosopher whose trip to Benghazi sparked Mr Sarkozy into action, described the president as "clear-sighted and courageous".

The left-wing press believes Mr Sarkozy is exploiting the occasion in order to "re-presidentialise" himself and distract opinion from domestic problems. But it does not question that his decisions were the right ones.

And others are outright fulsome.

Will the euphoria last?

According to Christophe Barbier, editor of the centre-right L'Express magazine and no fawning mouthpiece, Mr Sarkozy will be remembered "as the leader of the G8 who at the last minute managed to manoeuvre western democracies into action against Gaddafi's madness.

"If the end result is a victory - in other words if the Gaddafi regime collapses without giving way to trivial chaos, then Nicolas Sarkozy, in Benghazi as well as Paris, will be hailed as the liberator.

"In advance of all the rest, he launched a war of the just."

Such praise is rare indeed for the president, and it would be churlish not to let him enjoy it.

Because, let's face it, the euphoria is unlikely to last.

The De Gaulle moment



De Gaulle was a French general and statesman. In 1940, as under-secretary of national defence and war, he refused to accept the French government's truce with the Germans. He became leader of the Free French and left Paris for London. In June, he broadcast an impassioned call for resistance to the Nazi occupation of France from the BBC's headquarters. The rallying cry was to become known as 'l'Appel du 18 Juin'.

The initial phase of the Libyan campaign has been dramatic, exciting and effective. But looking ahead, what guarantee is there that the news will stay as good?

If past experience is anything to go by, the campaign will be punctuated by frustrations, reverses and the occasional blunder.

A neat conclusion, with Gaddafi toppled by a palace coup and the Libyan nation uniting behind a new democratic government, cannot be ruled out. But it is not exactly the most likely outcome.

As the political sage Jacques Attali put it this week: "The only way to play chess is to look several moves ahead, and that's not what those who launched this conflict appear to have done."

Public opinion is fickle. Some may recall that it was a noble instinct that prompted the call to action. Most won't.

But there is another reason the president is unlikely to reap many dividends from the Libya episode.

Sarkozy may be trying to act in a De Gaullian manner, but he is quite evidently not De Gaulle.

The main reason Sarkozy has been so low in the opinion polls is not so much what he has or has not done, but the simple fact that many French people do not like him.

That is not going to change - however decisive the president's actions.

The French nation had a bond with Charles de Gaulle, as it also did - albeit to a lesser extent -- with subsequent presidents like Francois Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac.

It is hard to detect any such bond with Nicolas Sarkozy.

Right now many people admire what he is doing, and they are grateful that he has made France stand tall.

But, it seems, they are not about to take him to their hearts.

Europe to Test Safety of Nuclear Reactors

By [JAMES KANTER](#)

BRUSSELS — After a week of bickering over the future of nuclear power, [European Union](#) leaders reached one point of agreement Friday as they decided that reactors across all 27 member nations should undergo safety tests in response to the continuing radiation leaks from a beleaguered plant in Japan.

The move — which came as Europe also remained split over action in Libya and as leaders struggled to calm markets with a plan to bolster the euro — was a rare note of accord on nuclear power.

“We cannot simply pursue business as usual” after the disaster in Japan, Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) of Germany said at the end of a two-day summit meeting of E.U. heads of state and government in Brussels.

The technology supplies about 30 percent of the Union’s electricity. But bitter divisions persist between countries like Austria, which banned [nuclear energy](#) in the late 1970s, and Britain, which is planning to build a new fleet of reactors to replace its aging models.

The tests agreed to Friday are voluntary, but [José Manuel Barroso](#), the president of the [European Commission](#), said the tests should be conducted at all 143 reactors across the Union. Mr. Barroso also called for “comprehensive” tests on plants in neighboring countries like Switzerland.

The tests represent only a modest step toward centralized oversight of nuclear energy facilities in Europe, where member states zealously guard control over their energy industries. But Mrs. Merkel insisted that the reviews “will be somewhat different from the safety tests we have had up until now.”

The plan approved Friday calls for national regulators to conduct the tests on the basis of common criteria drafted with the European Commission. The leaders said national regulators would then make the results public. Each government would evaluate the results and make any decisions on shutdowns.

The tests should assess threats from earthquakes, floods, airplane crashes and terrorists and examine the robustness of backup cooling systems, according to Günther Oettinger, the bloc’s energy commissioner. The tests should also assess the security of ponds where highly radioactive spent fuel is stored, Luis Echávarri, director general of the [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#)’s Nuclear Energy Agency, said in an interview this week.

After an earthquake and a tsunami knocked out backup power, setting off a crisis at the Fukushima plant north of Tokyo, advocates of nuclear power have stepped up efforts to portray Europe, where severe earthquakes are rare, as being relatively safe. But opponents have seized on an opportunity to highlight concerns about the vulnerability of Russian-designed reactors in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and to discourage the construction of a new reactor in Bulgaria.

By backing the tests, Mrs. Merkel was partly seeking to assuage public concern ahead of a sensitive election on Sunday in the state of Baden-Württemberg, where there are a number of reactors. Germany gets about a quarter of its power from nuclear, but opposition to the technology is widespread, stoked by the accident at Chernobyl, in Ukraine, in 1986.

Mrs. Merkel already has ordered a temporary halt of seven of the oldest reactors in Germany. That signaled a major shift by the chancellor, who had previously supported extending the lives of many of those reactors.

Mrs. Merkel said at a news conference that “decommissioning and phasing out is one option, but there is also the modernization option” for reactors and plants that did not pass the tests. But analysts said Germany could be on the cusp of a more profound policy reversal

If Mrs. Merkel's party were to lose the election Sunday, said Mark C. Lewis, a managing director at [Deutsche Bank](#), "this would be such a shock to Germany's body politic that the legislation to extend the operating lives of Germany's nuclear reactors passed last October would almost certainly face very material changes, and some or all of Germany's 17 nuclear reactors an accelerated schedule for their permanent shutdown."

The so-called stress tests approved by the Union are also a delicate matter for France, the world's second-biggest nuclear power producer after the United States.

French officials want the tests to highlight how the reactors it manufactures — and that could become an important export — are the safest choice for nations choosing nuclear energy.

President [Nicolas Sarkozy](#) of France suggested on Friday that what happened in Japan would not happen in landlocked countries and countries that had not experienced similar tsunamis in Europe. Even so, "were the tests to be failed or to be unsatisfactory we will take all necessary measures, which simply means shutting them down," said Mr. Sarkozy, who added that all 58 reactors in France would be tested.

Earlier in the week, in thinly veiled criticism of Germany, the French energy minister, [Éric Besson](#), said shutting plants on the basis of their age was not suitable in France because other risks, like flooding, based on the location of a plant, were likely to be more significant. Mr. Besson also criticized Mr. Oettinger, and a member of the same political party in Germany as Mrs. Merkel, for warning of an imminent catastrophe in Japan last week.

Opponents of nuclear power immediately complained that the tests will not be rigorous enough to lead to the closure of reactors that lack secondary containment, move spent fuel from vulnerable pools into dry storage, and halt plans for reactors in seismic regions.

"These stress tests are designed to give the impression that there's a new evaluation of the risks of nuclear power," said Rebecca Harms, a German member of the [European Parliament](#). "But politicians in France and Germany really want to use them to win new acceptance for nuclear power," she said.

In another sign of concern in Europe about events in Japan, E.U. food experts late on Thursday ordered random checks on food and animal feed imports for radioactive contamination.

When food and feed arrives in Europe from 12 prefectures in Japan including Fukushima and Tokyo, at least 10 percent of it will be randomly checked, including using laboratory analysis. Random inspections will also be made on 20 percent of food imports from Japan's other 35 prefectures.

The European Commission, the E.U. executive, emphasized that [food safety](#) risks from Japan were low because of the relatively small amount of exports to Europe and because Japanese authorities had taken measures to block sales of any contaminated products.

We've got to stop bombing like this

By: [Michael Kinsley](#)

March 22, 2011 04:36 AM EDT

Wait a minute. How did this happen? A month or so ago, massive bombing of Libya was on no one's agenda. Libya's government was just as tyrannical, and its leader was just as loony then as he is now. Other governments around the world were even worse, and still are. In fact, among the usual enthusiasts for this sort of thing, Libya was considered one of the least urgent cases of awfulocracy because we had supposedly de-fanged Colonel Qadhafi back in 2003 when he suddenly surprised everyone by promising to dismantle his secret nuclear program, permit inspections, and abide by the terms of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Qadhafi was like a Middle Eastern Fidel Castro - dead ... we were just waiting for him to lie down. What's more, credit for this tremendous victory was assigned to George W. Bush as a bonus side effect of his decision to invade Iraq and take down Saddam Hussein. This put the fear of Allah in the mercurial colonel. Or so they said. But apparently not. Somehow, Muammar got his Mojo back. People will now say, of course, that Qadhafi took the measure of President Obama and decided to live on after all, and I fear that Obama may sink us into a third simultaneous military quagmire in order to disprove this.

But Obama surely would not have chosen this moment and this target merely as an opportunity to prove he has cojones. Nor would his secretary of state, probably. So how comes it that the United States is now more-or-less committed to overthrowing the Qadhafi regime, and soon? That's not yet our official position, of course. Officially, we are merely enforcing a "no-fly zone" imposed by the United Nations, and trying to protect a dissident movement from being crushed. What's more, we are supposedly mere participants in a multilateral effort. Supposedly, in fact, we're not even the leader of this coalition, a role we have turned over to the British and French. (You knew the war was serious when the New York Times started to refer to our side in headlines as "the allies.") It's true that France jumped the queue rather than waiting its turn to bomb like all the other, better-behaved countries (even while delaying the official start by summoning all the players to Paris over the weekend). But that doesn't make them the leaders. That just makes them French.

As for that UN resolution, it's more a matter of "let's you and him fight." The US is doing all the heavy lifting. And if the US had been opposed, it would not be happening. If Qadhafi is still in power a year from now, even if he is obeying the "no fly" rules, it will be regarded world-wide as more evidence of America's decline as a great power and regarded in America as evidence that Democrats in general and Obama and Hillary Clinton in particular are not ready to play foreign policy with the big children. On a more high-minded level, Obama would like to demonstrate that sharing the burden—including the burden of leadership—with coalition partners is a better way to go about this sort of thing. Anyway, he's in it now—and so are we. And when he says that compromise is unacceptable, there's every reason to believe he means it. On Monday we bombed Qadhafi's residence. The "no-fly" zone is apparently a "no breath" zone as well for some people.

So once again the bombs are bursting on CNN. But why? We're getting terribly familiar with this routine, and even complacent about it. Obama wasn't even in this country when the bombing started. He was in Brazil—about as far out of it, politically as well as geographically, as you can get. The bombing started Saturday afternoon, and on Monday morning the Washington Post editorial and op-ed pages contained not a single word about it. How are we supposed to know what to think?

Obviously, things are changing in the Middle East. As everyone says, the democratic revolt that is sweeping the region is our opportunity to get on "the right side of history" for once. But how sure are you that the protesters for democracy (if that is in fact what they are protesting for) will credit the United States with helping their cause, rather than blaming us for raining bombs on yet another Arab country? Inevitably, there will be—probably already is— "collateral damage" (a mosque built too close to a fuel storage facility, or an orphanage hit by accident when US intelligence mistakes it for a military training camp). We will be forced to plead "accidents can happen," which is true and a good excuse in the middle of a war. But it's not a good excuse before the war starts. In 1986, Qadhafi scored a propaganda victory when US bombs on Tripoli killed a little girl he claimed was his adopted daughter. (True, Qadhafi is fairly loose in his definition of offspring. In a letter to Obama on Sunday, he repeatedly referred to the president as "our son." Although he might just have been goading the birthers.)

The elder Brahmins of the region, represented by the Arab League, are sending decidedly mixed signals as always. No doubt they could live very happily without Muammar Qadhafi. But they don't care for revolution of either the democratic or theocratic kind, and don't want to be seen in a coalition with the United States to violate the sovereignty of yet another Arab country. Meanwhile, they are doing very nicely on the wrong side

of history, with oil up to over \$102 a barrel as of mid-day Monday. In the annals of ingratitude, there is nothing like it. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have broken every promise they made before the first Gulf War about moving to democracy when it was over.

Was there nothing we could have done between sitting on our hands and launching something close to all-out war? Sure there is. It's what we did for eastern Europe that helped bring victory in the Cold War: verbal support and financial support for dissidents and democrats. Make clear which side we're on—but without overpromising, as in Hungary, 1957. It sounds like the opposite of "speak softly and carry a big stick," and in a way, it is. But it worked to defeat Communism, and our track record with bigger ambitions in smaller situations has not been impressive.

Michael Kinsley is a columnist for POLITICO. The founder of Slate, Kinsley has also served as editor of The New Republic, editor-in-chief of Harper's, editorial and opinion editor of the Los Angeles Times and a columnist for The Atlantic.



Global Supply Lines at Risk as Shipping Lines Shun Japan

By [KEITH BRADSHER](#)

HONG KONG — The economic disruptions from Japan's crisis have cascaded into another, crucial link in the global supply chain: cargo shipping.

Fearing the potential impact on crews, cargo and vessels worth tens of millions of dollars, some of the world's biggest container shipping lines have restricted or barred their ships from calling on ports in Tokyo Bay over concerns about radiation from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Meantime, ports in China are starting to require strict radiation checks on ships arriving from Japan. And in California on Friday, the first ship to reach the Port of Long Beach since Japan's earthquake was boarded and scanned for radiation by Coast Guard and federal customs officials before being allowed to dock.

Big Japanese ports much farther south of Tokyo, like Osaka and Kobe, are still loading and unloading cargo. But the Tokyo Bay ports of Tokyo and Yokohama are normally Japan's two busiest, representing as much as 40 percent of the nation's foreign container cargo. If other shipping companies join those already avoiding the Tokyo area, as radiation contamination spreads from Fukushima Daiichi 140 miles north, the delays in getting goods in and out of Japan would only grow worse.

The shipping industry's fears have escalated since port officials in Xiamen, China, earlier this week detected radiation on a large container ship belonging to Mitsui O.S.K. Lines. The vessel, which is still under quarantine, had sailed down Japan's northeast coast and reportedly came no closer than 80 miles to the damaged nuclear power plant.

Hapag-Lloyd, a German container shipping line that is one of the world's largest, halted service to Tokyo and Yokohama after the tsunami swamped Fukushima Daiichi. The shipper has not resumed service to those ports.

"We put safety ahead of everything else," said Eva Gjersvik, the company's senior director for corporate communications, adding that the company was reviewing daily whether to resume sailings to Tokyo.

Reuters reported that another German shipper, Claus-Peter Offen, has also stopped calling at Tokyo and Yokohama.

OOCL, a shipping line based in Hong Kong, said late Friday that the company had decided to halt all traffic to Tokyo and Yokohama.

OOCL will take Tokyo-bound containers to Osaka instead and send them overland from there, said Stanley Shen, the head of investor relations. The company has also drafted contingency plans to prevent its containers from traveling even overland to Tokyo if radiation levels increase in the Japanese capital, Mr. Shen added.

Merchant vessels may have to be scrapped if quarantined even temporarily for radioactivity, because they would face extra coast guard checks for years at subsequent destinations, said Basil M. Karatzas, the managing director for projects and finance at Compass Maritime Services, a ship brokerage in Teaneck, N.J.

The extra inspections make it hard to keep a schedule. "The charterers in the future will try to avoid the vessel because of the likelihood it will be delayed again," Mr. Karatzas said.

It is not only commercial ships that are giving the radiation region a wide berth.

A senior nuclear executive said on Friday evening that the [United States Navy](#) had moved nuclear-powered vessels like the Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier far from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant after officers became concerned that radiation from the plant could enter the ships' air ducts.

The worry is not that the radiation would pose a threat to the vessels' crews, but that even trace contamination of the ducts could create problems in the extremely sensitive equipment aboard nuclear-powered vessels that is intended to detect any hint of a radioactive leak from onboard systems, said the executive, who insisted on anonymity to protect business connections.

Shippers, even if they can avoid radiation exposure, know that cargo coming from Japan is now subject to new delays.

In California on Friday, the ship scanned for radiation at the Port of Long Beach carried about 2,500 containers from four ports: Kobe and Nagoya in the south and Shimizu and Tokyo farther north.

Under protocols established after the Sept. 11 attacks, the United States Customs Service usually inspects all arriving shipments in radiation scans in the port. But according to Art Wong, a spokesman for the Port of Long Beach, concerns from dockworkers prompted Coast Guard and customs inspectors to board the Japanese ship in the harbor and scan the cargo for radiation with hand-held scanners. Only then was the ship allowed to dock.

Mr. Wong said he expected a slowdown. "One of the problems we've been hearing is they have transportation issues of getting things from northern Japan," he said. "Which is why we expect to get a slowdown of autos and auto parts. That should hit us in a few more weeks."

One of China's largest ports, Yantian port in Shenzhen, next to Hong Kong, announced Friday that it had begun screening all arriving vessels and containers for radiation if they had been to Japan in the preceding 28 days and if Yantian was their first port of call in China. These vessels will not be allowed to unload until after all screening has taken place.

The port of Hong Kong announced earlier this week that it would begin screening random vessels for radiation as well.

Hapag-Lloyd has started unloading Tokyo-bound containers near Osaka and sending them overland. Shippers are allowed to send containers to areas north of Tokyo, but must pay for them, because the company will not take them back afterward.

Maersk of Denmark and the German shipper Hamburg Süd have maintained port calls at Tokyo but are reassessing weather conditions and radiation there almost hourly, company officials said. The main weather worry is that a north wind might blow radiation south from the damaged nuclear reactors and then rain might wash radioactive particles out of the sky and onto vessels.

"The overriding factor for us is to safeguard the well-being of our seagoing staff and, at the same time, ensure that Japan is not cut off from the international flow of merchandise," Joachim A. Konrad, the deputy chairman of Hamburg Süd, said in a statement.

Container shipping lines typically buy some of their ships and lease the rest from finance companies and other owners. Some ship owners, particularly in Europe, are now trying to limit the shipping lines from using their vessels on services that include port calls in the Tokyo area, said a shipping line manager who insisted on anonymity because of the sensitivity of shipping lines' relationships with owners.

Jeffrey Landsberg, of Commodore Research, a shipping consulting firm, said that bulk shipping vessels carrying grain to Japan had been able to unload using Japan's undamaged southern ports. Some were diverted from disabled ports in the north.

Ports north of Tokyo were devastated by the earthquake and tsunami, but were not served by international shipping lines even before the crisis. But now, until the radiation problem is contained, Tokyo and Yokohama are themselves threatened as fully functioning seaports.

Jad Mouawad, William Neuman and Motoko Rich contributed reporting from New York, and Nick Bunkley from Detroit.

War of Semantics

By [PETER CATAPANO](#)

[The Thread](#) is an in-depth look at how major news and controversies are being debated across the online spectrum.

Tags:

[barack obama](#), [Libya](#), [semantics](#), [war](#)

war — *a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations (2) : a period of such armed conflict (3) : state of war*

kinetic — *of or relating to the motion of material bodies and the forces and energy associated therewith*

— Merriam-Webster.com

Don't feel bad. We're all confused.

While the week was full of news — the grave, anxiety-inducing kind that focuses the mind — it lacked certainty. It lacked clarity. Many voices spoke, questions were asked, but answers were few. Or foggy, or muddled. Without a doubt it was the mass confusion brought on by the many unknowns, both known and unknown (you see where I'm going here, I'm sure), that surround what I will for now call, for lack of a more definite term, *the operation* in Libya, that dominated the commentary since we gathered here last.

Manu Brabo/European Pressphoto Agency Rebel soldiers stood on a burnt tank of Muammar el-Qaddafi's forces after an Allied airstrike outside of Benghazi, Libya, on March 20.

You could take your pick of what surely were [hundreds of questions posed throughout the week](#), but pretty much everyone agreed that the answers from the president and his administration were vague, evasive and offered nothing like the confidence a commander in chief might be expected to offer in the days of a freshly launched ... call it what you will.

In one of the week's many "questions" posts, [Politico began](#):

It's hard to find a precedent for a president ordering U.S. military forces into action, then heading off for a five-day tour of Latin America, but that's just what President Barack Obama did when he approved the deployment of air and naval assets to establish a no-fly zone over Libya.

His homecoming gift is a barrage of questions about the military action Obama aides refuse to label a "war."

Politico's questions — *Can we really get out fast? France? Are you kidding? Will Congress rebel? What if Qaddafi holds on?* — were typical of the widespread inquiry, but it was the most basic of all, asked at a U.S. State Department press conference, that gave birth to the positively Rumsfeldian phrase now ringing in everyone's conflict lexicon.

Rick Richman at Commentary [laid it out here](#):

At the State Department press conference yesterday, acting deputy spokesman Mark Toner was asked a straightforward question:

QUESTION: Are we at war in Libya?

MR. TONER: We are implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1973. It is clearly a combat operation or combat mission. As the President made very clear, there will be no U.S. ground force involved in this and that the U.S. role is upfront — frontloaded, if you will, on this. But that's going to obviously recede into a more — a broader international coalition as we move forward to implement the no-fly zone.

QUESTION: So you would not say we're at war?

MR. TONER: I think we've — you love these sweeping characterizations and I appreciate it.

QUESTION: This isn't about what I love or do not love. (Laughter.) But the question on the table is: Are we at war in Libya or not?

MR. TONER: I would say it's a combat mission, clearly. But beyond that, you can parse that out.

So it's not a war; it's a frontloaded combat mission that's obviously going to recede into a coalition.

Later in the afternoon, in a press briefing on Air Force One as it returned to Washington, Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes was asked “if it's not a war, what's the right way to characterize this operation?”

MR. RHODES: ... I think what we've said is that this is a military operation that will be limited in both duration and scope. Our contribution to this military operation that is enforcing a U.N. Security Council resolution is going to be limited — time limited to the front end, and then we'll shift to a support role. ...

Q But it's not going to war, then?

MR. RHODES: Well, again, I think what we are doing is enforcing a resolution that has a very clear set of goals, which is protecting the Libyan people, averting a humanitarian crisis, and setting up a no-fly zone. Obviously that involves kinetic military action, particularly on the front end. ...

So it's not a war; it's a kinetic military action that is time-limited and contribution-limited on the front end.

(The exchange noted above occurs just before the 15:00 minute mark. The transcript is [transcript is here.](#))

That's right, *kinetic military action*. And for many it's causing flashbacks. Can you even say those words without conjuring the image of the former defense secretary?

A little background on the uses of “kinetic” in Washington was helpfully provided back in 2003 by Salon's Timothy Noah at Chatterbox, when the word frequently appeared in the Iraq war press conference patter of Donald Rumsfeld:

In common usage, “kinetic” is an adjective used to describe motion, but the Washington meaning derives from its secondary definition, “active, as opposed to latent.” Dropping bombs and shooting bullets — you know, killing people — is kinetic. But the 21st-century military is exploring less violent and more high-tech means of warfare, such as messing electronically with the enemy’s communications equipment or wiping out its bank accounts. These are “non-kinetic.”...

To those who deplore or resist going to war, “kinetic” is unconscionably euphemistic, with antiseptic connotations derived from high-school physics and aesthetic ones traceable to the word’s frequent use by connoisseurs of modern dance. To those who celebrate war (or at least find it grimly necessary), “kinetic” fails to evoke the manly virtues of strength, fierceness, and bravery. Imagine Rudyard Kipling penning the lines, “For it’s Tommy this, an’ Tommy that, an’ ‘Chuck him out, the brute!’/ But it’s ‘Saviour of ‘is country’ when the U.K goes kinetic.” Is it too late to remove this word from the Washington lexicon?

So has anyone got a handle on exactly why the administration refused to define the operation as a war?

[Peter Wehner finds meaning](#) in the inventive language, but that meaning is not to his liking. At Commentary, he writes, “[C]onfused language is often a manifestation of confused thoughts, and that’s certainly what we have with the Obama administration’s strategy (I used the word loosely) in Libya.” He continues:

The bombing has begun but don’t think for a moment we’re in a war; it’s a front-loaded kinetic action. The president says the stated policy of the U.S. is to remove Muammar Qaddafi from power — but he also says that the purpose of the military intervention isn’t to remove Qaddafi from power. Never the twain shall meet. We’re told a coalition is running the war, yet the coalition members themselves have no idea who’s in charge. Some want a unified NATO command while others do not. Basic questions are still unresolved. It’s therefore no wonder that the architects of a muddled and confusing military strategy would use language that is muddled and confusing to describe it. ...

[T]he president, having committed the U.S. to the conflict in Libya, is deeply ambivalent about it. He’s in, but only partially in, and boy does he want out. He’s like a guy who felt obligated to propose to a woman and regretted it the minute the words had passed his lips.

At Wired’s Danger Room [Spencer Ackerman is convinced that it’s plain old dishonesty](#). He writes:

It’s one thing to say that the U.S. is right to take action against Moammar Gadhafi. It’s quite another to insist that it’s not even a war. And it’s simply dishonest to do so while escalating the war.

But that’s the spin from the Obama White House. While the president travelled through Latin America, his aides told sympathetic audiences in Washington that Operation Odyssey Dawn “is a limited humanitarian intervention, not war,” in the words of White House Mideast troubleshooter Dennis Ross. A letter to Congress notifying lawmakers that Odyssey Dawn was in effect studiously avoided the word “war,” preferring the more

anodyne “military efforts” — which are “discrete” and “limited in their nature, duration, and scope.”

Ross’ remarks are outright deceptive. And it fits a pattern with President Obama: escalating U.S. military commitments while portraying them as essentially finite and limited. ...

It’s true that not every application of military force is a war. Reasonable people can disagree, but when Saddam Hussein’s removal of weapons inspectors in 1998 prompted four days of U.S. and British bombs and missile strikes, that didn’t quite rise to the level of a whole new war. By contrast, the concerted, open-ended multinational application of naval and air power to enforce a United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing “all necessary measures” to forcibly change the political behavior of a head of state — that’s something that Carl von Clausewitz would recognize in an instant. Call it smart, call it stupid, but please don’t call it anything besides war.

Jack Goldsmith at Lawfare gives [a very plausible explanation](#) for the administration’s avoidance of the W-word, given Obama’s background as an attorney, that points to past U.S. interventions in Bosnia and Haiti:

[I]t appears that the administration’s “not war” legal justification is grounded in two opinions by then-OLC head Walter Dellinger, [one](#) concerning the planned 1994 troop deployment in Haiti, and [the other](#) the 1995 troop deployment to help NATO ensure compliance with the Bosnia peace agreement. In those opinions Dellinger attempted to justify the relatively low-key interventions without embracing some of the broader theories of presidential war unilateralism going back to the Korean War. Dellinger essentially argued that because those interventions were consensual, limited in scope and duration, and not likely to lead to casualties, they did not amount to “War” within the meaning of the Declare War clause, and thus did not require congressional authorization.

Regardless of the semantics, frustrations over the lack of explanation from the president himself are spreading. Michael Tomasky at The Guardian [vents his anger](#):

You’re a president. You launch a war. Granted it’s not much of a war. But you are sending Americans into a position where they might die. And you don’t go on television and explain to the American people why you’ve made this decision?

One more time: you don’t go on television and explain to the American people why you’ve made this decision?

I find this incomprehensible. Reagan sent troops into Grenada on October 25, 1983. Two nights later, he was on television explaining why. Bush Sr. ordered strikes on Panama that began on December 19, 1990. The next night, he was on TV explaining why.

This is really, truly unbelievable to me, and the worst thing Obama has done as president.

And as if on cue, the specter hovering over this entire semantic debate reappeared, sitting for [an interview](#) with Politico’s Patrick Gavin on Wednesday. Rumsfeld, in a tone that, when compared with his barb-filled riffs of yore, could actually be called grandfatherly, criticized the Obama administration for a lack of focus: “You decide what it is you want to

do and then you get other countries to assist you in doing that. And, in this case, it looks like just the opposite was done, that the coalition is trying to determine the mission and it's confused. ... If peoples' lives are at risk and you're using military forces, you need to have a rather clear understanding as to who's in charge and who's making the decisions."

Still, Rumsfeld managed to muster something close to a note of sympathy for the president, on that whole bypassing Congress stuff: "When people criticized [Obama] for not going to Congress, criticizing the administration for not going to Congress, going to the United Nations and the Arab League instead, I kind of could understand why he didn't. If you went to Congress and asked for authorization to do something, you'd have to know what it was you wanted to do and you had to have decided before the fact with some precision and some clarity, as to what the mission would be."

By week's end, there was little to indicate the war of words would end. Fighting and confusion still reigned. But when all is chaos, it is always enlightening to return to the master.

Clarity

*I think what you'll find,
I think what you'll find is,
Whatever it is we do substantively,
There will be near-perfect clarity
As to what it is.
And it will be known,
And it will be known to the Congress,
And it will be known to you,
Probably before we decide it,
But it will be known.*

— Donald Rumsfeld, Department of Defense briefing, Feb. 28, 2003

(Verse rendering from Slate, in a 2003 post, "[The Poetry of D.H. Rumsfeld.](#)" Thanks.)

Europe's intervention in Libya

Who is in charge here?

Mar 25th 2011, 14:26



WHAT an odd way to run a war. Nearly a week into the allied air operations in Libya, the command structure remains murky. True, the coalition headed by America, France and Britain had to act in haste, and has had to build a command structure on the fly.

So after much intense diplomacy, NATO has agreed to take over the running of the no-fly zone over Libya. Yet the coalition will remain in charge of operations to attack Libyan forces on the ground. “At this moment, there will still be a coalition operation and a NATO operation,” said Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the NATO secretary-general.

This hybrid arrangement may be necessary to hold together those who are more muscular in terms of attacking Libyan forces on the ground, and those who want to stick to patrolling the airspace and waters. But it could prove awkward over time. It is reminiscent of the unhappy command-and-control arrangement that lasted for years in Afghanistan, whereby the NATO-led ISAF mission was responsible for peacekeeping and stabilisation while, alongside it, an American-led coalition ran the counter-terrorist mission, known as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

This was often an uncomfortable arrangement, causing much resentment, as special forces would sometimes hit targets without informing NATO commanders supposedly in charge of a particular area of operations. European commanders complained privately about gung-ho Americans while Americans seethed about spineless Europeans. Eventually the matter was resolved. America boosted its forces and took overall command of ISAF, bringing OEF under a single commander.

The situation may not be as bad in Libya; NATO and the current coalition may be a distinction without a difference. The NATO commander who will be in charge of the no-fly zone, [Admiral Samuel Locklear](#), is the same naval officer who, with an American hat, is already running the coalition’s Operation Odyssey Dawn. Moreover, the British say they expect all aspects of the operation to come under NATO command in the coming days.

The debate about the degree to which NATO controls the operation is odd. For the Americans, bringing NATO in means handing over responsibility to Europeans; for Europeans, NATO means America. France has resisted giving NATO too prominent a role for fear that it will turn off Arab allies; Italy says the NATO label would be an attraction because it would put a straitjacket on the gung-ho French.

While military commanders are accustomed to operating with different NATO and national hats, the politics may not be resolved until one of two things happens: either the coalition stops hitting ground targets to make the operation more palatable to Turkey, or Turkey accepts that bombing tanks and artillery firing on Libyan towns is, in fact, a necessary part of protecting civilians.

This leads back to the uncomfortable questions that have dogged the intervention: what are the aims and limits of the operation? And how long will it go on for? Speaking at a summit of European leaders in Brussels,

President Nicolas Sarkozy of France said last night the coalition had stopped a repetition of the Srebrenica massacre in 1995. That alone justifies taking action, but it does not answer how the operation will end.

As matters stand, the coalition has resorted to enough force to stop Colonel Qaddafi from crushing the revolt, but not yet enough to remove him from power. At this intensity, the intervention may well lead to a frozen conflict: think of Iraq under sanctions, no-fly zones and occasional air strikes for 12 years. The trouble with such a prospect is that Colonel Qaddafi could simply outlast the coalition's will to continue policing Libya; as with Iraq, sanctions have a tendency over time to weaken those imposing them.

Kurt Volker, a former American ambassador to NATO, [offers](#) a maximalist interpretation of the UN resolution authorising the use of force to protect Libyan civilians. "The sooner the West adopts a clear position that the UN's humanitarian goals can only be achieved by Qaddafi's removal from power, the sooner the crisis can begin to come to an end."

Nobody is yet prepared to adopt such a position. Indeed, President Sarkozy last night offered a more limited set of objectives. The video of his press conference is [here](#). To sum up, he said the coalition's job was to protect civilians from the threat of attack. Removing Colonel Qaddafi was a job for Libyans themselves. His condition for ending the attacks was for Libyan forces to withdraw to barracks and to stop besieging Libyan towns, not the departure of the colonel.

He offered a reason for sticking to a fairly narrow interpretation of the resolution: the need to maintain Arab support. As well as a couple of Qatari planes, the UAE has now [confirmed](#) it will send 12 jets to help out. Their rules of engagement are unclear. But all this is precious help, politically if not militarily.

In one of his more thoughtful moments, Mr Sarkozy said the prize was not just the fate of the Libyan people, but winning back the trust of Arab people as they seek to free themselves of autocratic rulers. He told Syria and Yemen, among others, that he will maintain the same position: Europeans would stand on the side of peaceful demonstrators against those who fire on their own people.

One can argue that Mr Sarkozy's formulation does not resolve the underlying worries about a stalemate. If Colonel Qaddafi really stopped resorting to force he would be finished anyway. So one should not expect him to stop entirely, though he might change tactics—for example putting his forces inside towns rather than around them to make it harder to hit them without causing civilian casualties. The French high command is already giving notice that operations could go on for weeks rather than days. It may be much longer.

One hope is that the regime will break up internally. Hillary Clinton has spoken of senior regime figures putting out feelers about possible exile, and Mr Sarkozy publicly encouraged defections, saying those who dissociated themselves from Colonel Qaddafi would have a place in a future Libya. David Cameron, the British prime minister, warned regime loyalists that every day they continued to support Colonel Qaddafi would bring them closer to prosecution for war crimes in the International Criminal Court. He told them:

Don't obey his orders. Walk away from your tanks. Leave the command-and-control that you are doing. Give up on this regime because it should be over for him and his henchmen.

But given the experience of Iraq, it is hard to put much faith in this outcome; Saddam was only removed by a full-blown invasion.

Can one increase pressure on the colonel to hasten his demise? French officials are speaking of creating large zones of humanitarian protections, defended by the United Nations. Another is to move beyond merely protecting Mr Qaddafi's opponents to strengthening them: beginning with humanitarian aid, and perhaps increasing the rebels' political profile (France would like the opposition "national council" in Benghazi to be represented at next week's conference on Libya in London). Should one train and arm them too? "It is a good question," says one senior French source, nodding his head.

One problem with this strategy is that there is currently an arms embargo on Libya. A new UN resolution would be needed, and one could expect intense resistance to the notion of the world arming one side of a civil war. The danger is of arming the wrong sort of people—the opposition national council includes prominent former members of Colonel Qaddafi’s regime. Another risk is of a future “blowback” of the sort that took place in Afghanistan, where some of the anti-Soviet Arab fighters that were supported by the West and Saudi Arabia in the 1980s went on to become the core of al-Qaeda.

Mr Sarkozy said the decision to take action in Libya was hard to take. Deciding how to end it may prove even more difficult.

The euro zone

Money and politics

The Economist Mar 25th 2011, 1:00 by The Economist | Brussels



IT WAS supposed to the European summit when the crisis of the euro would finally be resolved with a comprehensive set of responses. The economic-governance reforms were supposed to be a “game changer”, in the view of José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission. It was not to be. The game has been postponed to June.

The reason? Democratic politics at the farthest ends of Europe: Finland and Portugal. The two countries, whose prime ministers are pictured, embody the split in the euro zone: north and south, snow and sun, fast-growing and sluggish, tight public finances versus yawning deficits. The crisis is weakening both creditor and debtor nations, and the political crisis mean the European Union has stumbled yet again just when it thought it was reaching the finishing line.

Start with Portugal. For months now, it has been the next candidate for an EU bailout, after Greece and Ireland. But its minority Socialist government, led by José Sócrates, has vowed not to seek external help. Portugal's experience of IMF programmes in the late 1970s and early 1980s has been seared in its politics. The IMF is even subject of a famous song by José Mario Branco ([FMI](#)). Rather than subject Portugal to such humiliation again, Mr Socrates has pushed through one austerity package after another.

His latest one, though, failed to get support in parliament and Mr Sócrates has handed in his [resignation](#). Elections are likely in May or June. With bond markets driving up the yield on Portuguese government debt, the crisis may well hasten the moment when Portugal has to ask for help. If so, the electoral contest may be decided by who gets pinned with the blame. Will Mr Sócrates be deemed guilty of failing to reform Portugal's sclerotic economy? Or will Pedro Passos Coelho, leader of the main centre-right opposition (confusingly called the Social Democrats, PSD), take the rap for bringing down the government, rattling the markets and delaying reforms?

The Portuguese crisis is hardly welcome news at the summit. Not for the first time, the EU's slow-moving decision process has been overtaken by events. But senior officials and diplomats claim to see a silver lining: the Social Democrats agree with the government's overall fiscal targets, but disagree with the methods Mr

Sócrates has chosen. And if the election means that Portugal gets a government with a clear majority and a mandate to carry out reforms, that may be better for Portugal, and for the euro, in the longer term.

That said, the crisis in Portugal highlights the fact that the “comprehensive” bargain to address the sovereign-debt crisis is still incomplete. The EU’s existing rescue funds may have enough money to rescue Portugal. But can they help Spain if, as many expect, it is next to be infected? Probably not.

That is why a central part of the package deal is to increase the lending capacity of the EU bailout funds to ensure they can give out the full headline amount of €500 billion. The main fund, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), can only lend about €250 billion of its headline figure of €440 billion.

Boosting the fund required, first of all, agreement on the shape of the permanent fund that will come into being in 2013. This was supposed to have been settled by finance ministers earlier this week, but Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, re-opened the issue because she wanted a longer period for countries to pay in the capital (not least to avoid too large a payment in 2013, the year of German parliamentary elections). That now seems to have been agreed.

Boosting the current “temporary” EFSF has also been agreed in principle, except that the final accord has been pushed back to June. That is because of political problems in Finland.

The government in Helsinki is [refusing](#) to sign up to any increase in the lending capacity of the EFSF until after its election next month. In part this is a constitutional issue, as parliament would have to be recalled for an emergency session to endorse any increase in Finland’s contribution, be it in terms of cash or guarantees. In part the reluctance is also a bit of electioneering. The centre-right National Coalition party, led by Jyrki Katainen, Finland’s finance minister, is expected to win the largest number of votes. But he is acutely sensitive to the strong challenge posed by the True Finns, a populist anti-immigrant and anti-EU party that has [surged](#) in the polls - in large part because of popular resentment at Finland having to contribute to the bail-outs of Greece and Ireland.

Asking Finland to reach again for its credit card before the election would only boost the True Finns, as would have to bail out Portugal. So in both Portugal and Finland, political leaders are hoping that Portugal does not have to ask for money any time soon.

03/25/2011 01:27 PM

Breakthrough in Brussels

European Leaders Agree to Euro Rescue Program

By [Sven Böll](#) in Brussels

EU leaders achieved a breakthrough in Brussels on Thursday night, reaching a deal on the permanent crisis fund that will come into effect in 2013. Nevertheless, worries that Portugal could soon require emergency aid money loomed large over the talks.

After agreeing to a last-minute change regarding the terms of how Germany would pay money into the new permanent bailout fund for the euro, European Union leaders on Thursday reached a final agreement on the plan that they hope will eliminate speculation over the future of the common currency.

Under the deal, the new European Stability Mechanism will replace the existing euro rescue package starting in 2013 - and will include a much larger war chest worth €700 billion (\$990 billion) in funding. In addition to €620 billion in credit guarantees, the fund will also include €80 billion in capital. As the largest stakeholder in the European Central Bank, Germany is obliged to provide €168.3 billion in credit guarantees as well as €21.7 billion in cash.

Originally, the plan had been for Germany to provide half that cash, around €10 billion in German taxpayer money, by 2013. That, at least, was the deal that had been negotiated between German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble of the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and his European colleagues. But 2013 is also a federal election year in Germany, and the conservatives -- together with their government coalition partner, the business-friendly Free Democratic Party (FDP) -- would prefer to lower taxes that year rather than transfer money to the euro rescue fund. On Thursday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) pushed through a compromise that would see Germany paying into the fund in five equal installments that would begin in 2013 and be spread out over several years rather than in one lump payment.

A Permanent Rescue Fund and Economic Government

In addition to the permanent euro crisis fund starting in 2013, Thursday's deal includes stricter debt rules to ensure the stability of the euro and a pact aimed at strengthening fiscal coordination among EU countries.

The European summit, which continues on Friday, had been billed as the final major summit to seal a long term rescue plan for the euro. A year after Greece's de facto bankruptcy -- leading to 12 months that saw the common currency fighting for survival -- the message from Brussels was: The euro will not spiral into another existential crisis. The euro has been saved for good.

But by the time the 27 European leaders arrived in Brussels on Thursday, global developments had begun to overshadow the euro -- in particular the war in Libya and the debate on the future of nuclear power in the wake of the Fukushima disaster in Japan.

Germany was not a beneficiary of the change in focus. EU irritation with Berlin over its recent foreign and domestic policy appeared to be as great in Brussels as it is back home. Other EU leaders are finding it difficult to understand why Germany, a country that profits directly from globalization as the world's second-largest exporter, can so consistently shirk its political responsibility when it comes to dealing with crises around the world.

The latest demonstration of this tendency was Germany's decision a week ago to abstain from a United Nations Security Council vote on creating a no-fly zone in Libya. The fact that Merkel's government made a 180-degree about-face on its nuclear energy policies in the wake of Fukushima also harmed Germany's credibility in other European capitals.

Particularly in Paris. Merkel managed a thin smile when she greeted French President Nicolas Sarkozy on Thursday in Brussels. But both Merkel's Libya stance and her nuclear policies have put her at odds with the French president, an ardent supporter of nuclear power and the main initiator of the military strikes on Tripoli.

Nevertheless, in addition to her successful last-minute change on how Germany will pay into the euro rescue fund, Merkel's nuclear policies likewise found some success. EU countries are likely to reach an agreement on a "stress test" for the 143 nuclear power plants located in the 27 EU member states. Under the plan, common criteria for the tests would be determined at the European level. The safety inspections, however, would fall under the authority of regulators at the national level.

The agreements on nuclear stress tests and a permanent euro crisis fund, however, threatened to be overshadowed by problems with the three countries that are creating the greatest uncertainty about the euro: Portugal, Ireland and Greece.

A Triple Crisis in Lisbon, Dublin and Athens

Since Wednesday night, Portugal has been operating without a functioning government. After Prime Minister Jose Socrates was unable to win the approval of a majority in parliament for the country's fourth austerity package in the past year, he resigned. Socrates, a member of Portugal's Socialist Party, is present in Brussels and was even given warm words of encouragement for his austerity efforts by Merkel. Still, he is a prime minister without a mandate -- a fact that is likely to exacerbate his country's financial problems.

Nevertheless, Lisbon remains committed to solving its financial woes without making use of EU aid. Pedro Passos Coelho, the head of the conservative Social Democratic Party -- who polls suggest could become the next Portuguese prime minister -- has said he is against taking advantage of the stability fund. And the German delegation in Brussels is carefully choosing its language in order to avoid the impression that Berlin is pushing Lisbon to seek assistance.

Conflict continues between the EU and Ireland, with Dublin continuing to insist that the 6 percent interest rate charged on EU aid money is too high. Interest payments, say Irish leaders, could ultimately drive the country into bankruptcy -- exactly the opposite of the intended goal. In exchange, however, EU leaders are pressuring the new government of Prime Minister Enda Kenny to raise its corporate tax rate -- a request that is deeply unpopular in Ireland. Despite the dispute, Dublin refrained from blocking the permanent euro stability mechanism deal.

Greece, for its part, has already secured more favorable terms for its EU loans. The country is now paying 4 percent interest on the billions in aid it has received. Nevertheless, tax revenues are shrinking -- by close to 10 percent in January and February -- and it will be extremely difficult for the government to continue to operate without even further austerity measures. Many expect that Greece will ultimately have to restructure its debts.

Risk premiums on bonds from all three countries have risen rapidly in recent days as a result of the turbulence.

In addition to the tightened stability pact, the euro-zone member states also agreed to a "pact for competitiveness" that will establish a watered-down version of an economic government, with the partial harmonization of fiscal policy among euro-zone countries. Under the plan, EU leaders will agree to common targets each year that must then be

implemented through structural reforms at the national level. In addition to the euro-zone countries, other EU countries -- including Poland, Bulgaria, Denmark and Romania -- want to be part of the pact.

The provisional euro rescue fund that will continue through 2012 has also been expanded. Currently, the fund is only able to pay out €250 billion in order to ensure that it is able to maintain the highest-possible credit rating. But euro-zone countries, including Germany, will now put additional cash and guarantees into the fund to ensure that up to €440 billion in lending will be available to troubled euro-zone countries.

Europe's Libya Intervention: A Special Report

March 25, 2011

Distinct interests sparked the European involvement in Libya. The United Kingdom and France have issued vociferous calls for intervention in Libya for the past month, ultimately managing to convince the rest of Europe — with some notable exceptions — to join in military action, the Arab League to offer its initial support, and global powers China and Russia to abstain from voting at the U.N. Security Council.

U.S. President Barack Obama said March 21 that the leadership of the U.S.–European coalition against Libya would be transitioned to the European allies “in a matter of days.” While the United States would retain the lead during Operation Odyssey Dawn — intended to incapacitate Tripoli’s command and control, stationary air defenses and airfields — Obama explained that Odyssey Dawn would create the “conditions for our European allies and Arab partners to carry out the measures authorized by the U.N. Security Council resolution.” While Obama pointed out that the U.S.–European intervention in Libya is very much Europe’s war, French nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle (R91) and Italian aircraft carrier Giuseppe Garibaldi (551) arrived in waters near Libya, giving Europeans a valuable asset from which to increase European air sortie generation rates and time on station.

Before analyzing the disparate interests of European nations in Libya, one must first take stock of this coalition in terms of its stated military and political goals.

The Military Response to the ‘Arab Spring’

The intervention in Libya thus far has been restricted to the enforcement of a no-fly zone and to limited attacks against ground troops loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi in the open. However, the often-understated but implied political goal seems to be the end of the Gadhafi regime. (Some French and British leaders certainly have not shied from stressing that point.)

Europeans are not united in their perceptions of the operation’s goals — or on how to wage the operation. The one thing the Europeans share is a seeming lack of an exit strategy from a struggle originally marketed as a no-fly zone akin to that imposed on Iraq in 1997 to a struggle that is actually being waged as an airstrike campaign along the lines of the 1999 campaign against Serbia, with the goal of regime change mirroring that of the 2001 Afghan and 2003 Iraq campaigns.

Underlying Europeans’ willingness to pursue military action in Libya are two perceptions. The first is that Europeans did not adequately support the initial pro-democratic protests across the Arab world, a charge frequently coupled with accusations that many European governments failed to respond because they actively supported the regimes being challenged. The second perception is that the Arab world is in fact seeing a groundswell of pro-democratic sentiment.

The first charge particularly applies to France — the country now most committed to the Libyan intervention — where Former French Foreign Minister Michele Alliot-Marie vacationed in Tunisia a few weeks before the revolution, using the private jet owned by a businessman close to the regime, and offered then-Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali the services of French security forces to suppress the rebellion. Though an extreme example, the French case highlights the close business, energy and often personal relationships

Europeans had with Middle Eastern leaders.

In fact, EU states have sold Gadhafi 1.1 billion euros (\$1.56 billion) worth of arms between 2004, when they lifted their arms embargo, and 2011, and were looking forward to much more in the future. Paris and Rome, which had lobbied hardest for an end to the embargo, were particularly active in this trade. As recently as 2010, France was in talks with Libya for the sale of 14 Dassault Mirage fighter jets and the modernization of some of Tripoli's aircraft. Rome, on the other hand, was in the middle of negotiating a further 1 billion euros worth of deals prior to the unrest. British media meanwhile had charged the previous British government with kowtowing to Gadhafi by releasing Abdel Basset Ali al-Megrahi, a Libyan held for the Pan Am Flight 103 bombing. According to widespread reports, the United Kingdom's Labour government released al-Megrahi so that British energy supermajor BP would receive favorable energy concessions in Libya.

The second perception is the now-established narrative in the West that the ongoing protests in the Middle East are truly an outburst of pro-democratic sentiment in the Western sense. From this, there arises a public perception in Europe that Arab regimes must be put on notice that severe crackdowns will not be tolerated since the protests are the beginning of a new era of democracy in the region.

These two perceptions have created a context under which Gadhafi's crackdown against protesters is simply unacceptable to Paris and London and unacceptable to domestic public opinion in Europe. Not only would tolerating Tripoli's crackdown confirm European leaderships' multi-decade fraternization with unsavory Arab regimes, but the eastern Libyan rebels' fight against Gadhafi has been grafted on to the narrative of Arab pro-democracy movements seeking to overthrow brutal regimes — even though it is unclear who the eastern rebels are or what their intentions are for a post-Gadhafi Libya.

The Coalition

According to U.N. Security Council resolution 1973, the military objective of the intervention is to enforce a no-fly zone over Libya and to protect civilians from harm across all of Libya. The problem is that the first goal in no way achieves the second. A no-fly zone does little to stop Gadhafi's troops on the ground. In the first salvo of the campaign — even before suppression of enemy air defenses operations — French aircraft attacked Libyan ground troops around Benghazi. The attack — which was not coordinated with the rest of the coalition, according to some reports — was meant to signal two things: that the French were in the lead and that the intervention would seek to protect civilians in a broader mandate than just establishing a no-fly zone.

Going beyond the enforcement of the no-fly zone, however, has created rifts in Europe, with both NATO and the European Union failing to back the intervention politically. Germany, which broke with its European allies and voted to abstain from resolution 1973, has argued that mission creep could force the coalition to get involved in a drawn-out war. Central and Eastern Europeans, led by Poland, have been cautious in providing support because it yet again draws NATO further from its core mission of European territorial defense and the theater they are mostly concerned about: the Russian sphere of influence. Meanwhile, the Arab League, which initially offered its support for a no-fly zone, seemed to renege as it became clear that Libya in 2011 was far more like Serbia 1999 than Iraq in 1997 — airstrikes against ground troops and installations, not just a no-fly zone. Italy, a critical country because of its air bases close to the Libyan theater, has even suggested that if some consensus is not found regarding NATO's involvement it would withdraw its offer of air bases so that "someone else's action did not rebound on us," according to Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini. In reality, Rome is concerned that the Franco-British alliance is going to either reduce Italy's interests in a post-Ghadafi Libya or fail to finish the operation, leaving Italy to deal with chaos a few hundred miles across the Mediterranean.

Ultimately, enforcing a humanitarian mandate across the whole of Libya via air power alone will be impossible. It is unclear how Gadhafi would be dislodged from power from 15,000 feet in the sky. And while Europeans have largely toed the line in the last couple of days that regime change is not the explicit goal of the intervention, French and British leaders continue to caveat that “there is no decent future for Libya with Gadhafi in power,” as British Prime Minister David Cameron stated March 21, virtually mirroring a statement by Obama. But wishing Gadhafi gone will not make it so.

Endgame Scenarios

With the precise mission of the intervention unclear and exact command and control structures yet to be decided (though the intervention itself is already begun, a summit in London on March 29 will supposedly hash out the details) it is no surprise that Europeans seem to lack a consensus as to what the exit strategies are. Ultimately some sort of NATO command structure will be enacted, even if it is possible that NATO never gives its political consent to the intervention and is merely “subcontracted” by the coalition to make coordination between different air forces possible. Europe's Libya Intervention: Special Series

U.S. military officials, on the other hand, have signaled that a divided Libya between the Gadhafi-controlled west and the rebel-controlled east is palatable if attacks against civilians stop. Resolution 1973 certainly does not preclude such an end to the intervention. But politically, it is unclear if either the United States or Europe could accept that scenario. Aside from the normative issues the European public may have with a resolution that leaves a now-thoroughly vilified Gadhafi in power, European governments would have to wonder whether Gadhafi would be content ruling Tripolitania, a pared-down version of Libya, given that the bulk of the country's oil fields and export facilities are located in the east.

Gadhafi could seek non-European allies for arms and support and/or plot a reconquest of the east. Either way, such a scenario could necessitate a drawn-out enforcement of the no-fly zone over Libya — testing already war-weary European publics' patience, not to mention government pocketbooks. It would also require continuous maritime patrols to prevent Gadhafi from unleashing migrants en masse, a possibility that is of great concern for Rome. Now that Europe has launched a war against Gadhafi, it has raised the costs of allowing a Gadhafi regime to remain lodged in North Africa. That the costs are not the same for all participating European countries — especially for Italy, which has the most to lose if Gadhafi retains power — is the biggest problem for creating European unity.

The problem, however, is that an alternative endgame scenario where Gadhafi is removed would necessitate a commitment of ground troops. It is unclear that the eastern rebels could play the role of the Afghan Northern Alliance, whose forces had considerable combat experience such that only modest special operations forces and air support were needed to dislodge the Taliban (or, rather, force them to retreat) in late 2001 through early 2002. Thus, Europe would have to provide the troops — highly unlikely, unless Gadhafi becomes thoroughly suicidal and unleashes asymmetrical terrorist attacks against Europe — or enlist the support of an Arab state, such as Egypt, to conduct ground operations in its stead. The latter scenario seems far-fetched as well, in part because Libyans historically have as much animosity toward Egyptians as they do toward Europeans.

What ultimately will transpire in Libya probably lies somewhere in between the extreme scenarios. A temporary truce is likely once Gadhafi has been sufficiently neutralized from the air, giving the West and Egypt sufficient time to arm, train and support the rebels for their long march to Tripoli (though it is far from clear that they are capable of this, even with considerable support in terms of airpower, basic training, organization

and military competencies). The idea that Gadhafi, his sons and inner circle would simply wait to be rolled over by a rebel force is unlikely. After all, Gadhafi has not ruled Libya for 42 years because he has accepted his fate with resignation — a notion that should worry Europe's governments now looking to end his rule.

Next: France and the United Kingdom have led the charge on the intervention in Libya. Our next installment in this series examines their role in the crisis there.

Un geste pour la planète : l'impression de cette information est-elle vraiment nécessaire ?

Qui sont les insurgés libyens ?

LEMONDE.FR | 24.03.11 | 20h03 • Mis à jour le 24.03.11 | 20h03



UHAIB SALEM

Nous encourageons les Libyens à faire défection, à rejoindre les oppositions qui s'expriment, à se rassembler dans une démarche de transition démocratique, indiquait mercredi 23 mars une source proche de l'Elysée à l'AFP. Nous souhaitons que tous ceux, à Tripoli, qui suivent encore Kadhafi, réfléchissent à leur avenir à la lumière de la résolution 1973."

Si [le texte de la résolution](#) votée par le conseil de sécurité de l'ONU n'a a priori pour objectif que de protéger les populations civiles, "il est bien évident, ne racontons pas d'histoires, que le but de tout cela est de permettre au peuple libyen de choisir son régime", comme le déclarait Alain Juppé au JT de France 2. Tous les regards sont donc tournés vers les rebelles qui, depuis la mi-février, réclament le départ de Mouammar Kadhafi et luttent contre son armée. Mais si leur objectif à court terme est clair, leurs revendications restent assez floues.

- **Quelles sont les composantes du "mouvement insurgé" ?**

Al-Jazira les désigne souvent sous le terme de "pro-démocratie", mais lors d'un entretien publié dans *Le Monde* du 20 février, Luis Martinez, directeur de recherches au Centre de recherches et d'études internationales (CERI) de Sciences Po Paris, était plus précis : "Il y a trois groupes parmi les contestataires : les islamistes, (...) les défenseurs des droits de l'homme, (...) et les plus nombreux : les jeunes."

Ces composantes ont-elles une vision commune de ce que pourrait constituer l'après-Kadhafi ? "Ils n'en sont pas là", explique François Dumasy, spécialiste de la Libye et maître de conférences à l'Institut d'études politiques d'Aix-en-Provence. "Leur seul véritable dénominateur commun est de vouloir la fin du régime. Il faut bien imaginer que pendant les 42 années de règne de Kadhafi, l'expression politique a été réduite au minimum."

Un avis qui n'est pas totalement partagé par Hasni Abidi, directeur du Centre d'études et de recherche sur le monde arabe et méditerranéen (Cermam) de Genève. Lors de ses voyages en Libye au milieu des années 2000, il a constaté la présence d'un grand nombre de partis politiques, qui n'avaient pas de grande influence mais qui ont pu servir de terreau à la révolte. Quant à la composante islamiste, partisane d'un Etat religieux, elle "existe, avec des organisations comme le Groupe islamique combattant ou le parti de l'Oumma, mais n'est pas majoritaire", explique Hasni Abidi.

Le gros des troupes est donc constitué de jeunes, les "shababs, inquiets de la libéralisation de l'économie et de la montée du chômage connue ces dernières années", explique François Dumasy, qui les compare aux manifestants aperçus dans les révolutions tunisienne et égyptienne. Un mouvement composite, uni dans sa volonté de renverser le régime mais dont les aspirations ne sont pas clairement définies.

- **Quelle est la place du Conseil national de transition (CNT) au sein de la rébellion ?**

Ce comité, chargé de préparer l'après-Kadhafi en soumettant au vote une nouvelle Constitution, est présidé par Moustapha Abdeljelil, ancien ministre de la justice du gouvernement de Tripoli qui a rejoint les insurgés au début du mouvement. Il a été

créé le 27 février et est composé de trente et un membres, qui tirent leur légitimité des "conseils locaux de la révolution" créés dans les villes prises au régime de Tripoli.

"Son rôle est d'être triplement représentatif de la révolte, analyse Hasni Abidi. Il doit à la fois être à l'image de la population tribale libyenne, de sa répartition géographique et de ses opinions politiques." Pour l'instant, [le site officiel du comité](#) liste seulement dix membres, la grande majorité préférant l'anonymat.

Dans [un chat organisé sur LeMonde.fr](#), le philosophe Bernard-Henri Lévy, [initiateur du rapprochement du CNT avec le gouvernement français](#), expliquait ainsi qu'un des conseillers était issu de la tribu dont est originaire Mouammar Kadhafi. Les autres représentent [les villes où les combats persistent](#), et restent anonymes pour ne pas être identifiés par le régime.

En plus des "ambassadeurs des villes libérées", on retrouve également Fathi Tirbil, arrêté par la police du régime, chargé de représenter la jeunesse. Les manifestations qui avaient marqué le début de la révolte étaient [organisées en soutien à ce jeune avocat](#).

Pourtant, pour [l'envoyé spécial du Monde à Benghazi, Rémy Ourdan](#), "on ne sent pas parmi la population un enthousiasme phénoménal vis-à-vis du Conseil national de transition". Un succès mitigé qui pourrait s'expliquer par le fait que le comité a été créé "dans l'urgence et sans véritable programme", selon François Dumasy. La difficulté d'identifier clairement ses membres, et parce que son président et son porte-parole a occupé des responsabilités au sein du régime de Kadhafi ne jouent certainement pas en faveur de ce "gouvernement parallèle", reconnu comme interlocuteur légitime par Nicolas Sarkozy au début du mois de mars.



Quelles sont les revendications du CNT ?

Parmi les membres qui composent le CNT, différentes tendances politiques sont représentées. "On peut par exemple y trouver des royalistes nostalgiques du régime d'Idris I^{er}, comme des partisans d'une démocratie constitutionnelle", précise Hasni Abidi. De quoi avoir des craintes quant à l'après-Kadhafi ? "La future Libye sera un Etat démocratique et laïque", assuraient mardi deux émissaires du CNT à ceux qui craignent une montée de l'islamisme. "Le peuple libyen est un peuple modéré et l'Etat ne sera pas conduit par des religieux", expliquaient-ils encore.

Une simple déclaration de bonnes intentions ? "Ils sont probablement sincères, mais répondent à une demande de l'Occident, estime François Dumasy. Au moment où le soutien à l'intervention est en train de se fissurer au niveau diplomatique, ils doivent rassurer en affichant des objectifs acceptables par la communauté internationale."

De son côté, Hasni Abidi pense qu'il est "trop tôt" pour aborder cette question, mais comprend cette déclaration : "Il n'est évidemment pas dans l'intérêt du CNT d'inquiéter l'Occident. Mais au final, bien que les islamistes ne soient pas majoritaires, ce seront les Libyens qui auront le dernier mot pour décider de leur modèle de société."

Allies Are Split on Goal and Exit Strategy of Libya Mission

By [STEVEN LEE MYERS](#) and [DAVID D. KIRKPATRICK](#)

WASHINGTON — Having largely succeeded in stopping a rout of [Libya's](#) rebels, the inchoate coalition attacking Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi's](#) forces remains divided over the ultimate goal — and exit strategy — of what officials acknowledged Thursday would be a military campaign that could last for weeks.

The United States has all but called for Colonel Qaddafi's overthrow from within — with American commanders on Thursday openly calling on the Libyan military to stop following orders — even as administration officials insist that is not the explicit objective of the bombing, and that their immediate goal is more narrowly defined.

[France](#) has gone further, recognizing the Libyan rebels as the country's legitimate representatives, but other allies, even those opposed to Colonel Qaddafi's erratic and authoritarian rule, have balked. That has complicated the planning and execution of the military campaign and left its objective ill defined for now.

Only on Thursday, the sixth day of air and missile strikes, did the allies reach an agreement to give command of the “no-fly” operation to [NATO](#) after days of public quarreling that exposed the divisions among the alliance's members.

“From the start, [President Obama](#) has stated that the role of the U.S. military would be limited in time and scope,” Secretary of State [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) said Thursday evening in announcing the plan.

But even that agreement — brokered by Mrs. Clinton and the foreign ministers of [Britain](#), France and Turkey — frayed almost immediately over how far the military campaign should go in trying to erode the remaining pillars of Colonel Qaddafi's power by striking his forces on the ground and those devoted to protecting him. It was salvaged, one diplomat said, only by papering over the differences concerning the crucial question of who actually controls military strikes on Libya's ground forces.

“There were differences in the scope of what NATO would do and what would remain with the national militaries,” a senior administration official said, expressing hope that the agreement on NATO command would be a step toward resolving them.

The questions swirling around the operation's command mirrored the larger strategic divisions over how exactly the coalition will bring it to an end — or even what the end might look like, and whether it might even conceivably include a Libya with Colonel Qaddafi remaining in some capacity. While few countries have openly sided with the Libyan leader, officials said on Thursday that most of the allies expected that the use of military force would lead to talks between the government and the rebels.

“I don't think anyone is ruling out some kind of negotiated settlement,” the official said. Colonel Qaddafi has responded defiantly, making the likelihood of his negotiated departure seem exceedingly remote.

The allied bombardment remains in its early stages. It has already badly eroded Libya's combat power — with scores of missile and airstrikes against Libya's air defenses and armored columns — but not yet drastically reversed the military equation on the ground.

Mr. Obama, having returned from his trip to Latin America on Wednesday, met privately at the White House with his senior national security officials, but he made no public statements, even as reservations percolated in Congress and elsewhere about the conflict and its end game.

Asked about concerns raised the day before in a letter by the House speaker, [John A. Boehner](#), Mr. Obama's spokesman, [Jay Carney](#), said, "I think the president's been very clear, and he has been asked and answered this question numerous times."

In fact, Mr. Obama has not made clear what will happen if the international coalition succeeds in establishing control of the skies over Libya, but Colonel Qaddafi's loyalists and rebels continue to attack and counterattack each other in a bloody, protracted stalemate.

"We should never begin an operation without knowing how we stand down," said [Joseph W. Ralston](#), a retired general who served as NATO commander and vice chairman of the [Joint Chiefs of Staff](#). "We did a no-fly zone over Iraq for 12 years and it did nothing to get rid of Saddam. So why do we think it will get rid of Qaddafi?"

In Paris, the French foreign minister, Alain Juppé, expressed confidence in the success of the operation so far, even as he urged patience. "The destruction of Qaddafi's military capacity is a matter of days or weeks, certainly not months," he told reporters, adding: "You can't achieve our objective in just five days."

But any exit strategy will depend on the climate on the ground, and whether rebel forces can be effective in defending themselves without international support. So far, the rebels in the east have failed to punch through the line of Qaddafi forces at the strategic city of Ajdabiya, even with foreign forces battering Libya's air and ground forces. In one potentially significant shift in momentum, the rebels were negotiating the surrender or withdrawal of one unit of Qaddafi troops in Ajdabiya. "We are trying to lead them to peace," said a rebel spokesman, Col. Ahmed Omar Bani.

In the western commercial center of Misrata, though, rebels say that airstrikes from international forces will enable them to fight off the Qaddafi siege but not to march to Tripoli, which remains a Qaddafi stronghold. Still, a rebel spokesman who has identified himself by only his first name, Mohammed, predicted that residents of Tripoli would rise up soon. "I know the situation there is really simmering," he said by telephone. "They have seen the dictator's murderous ways, and they feel his days are numbered."

In Tripoli, a few residents critical of the Qaddafi government — all speaking covertly, for fear of reprisals — said that coalition attacks had emboldened people there, who plan new protests after midday prayers on Friday.

But others said the intervention might have arrived too late to set off a popular uprising. "I do not think Tripolitarians will rise," one Libyan opposition figure with ties around Tripoli said, also speaking on condition of anonymity out of fear, citing the reprisals that the city's neighborhoods had already endured.

From the start, the administration insisted that it was acting to avert the imminent slaughter of civilians in Benghazi and other rebel-held cities, and that the goal of the military operations was clearly spelled out in the [United Nations Security Council](#) resolution.

Mr. Obama's administration, however, has clearly tried to avoid the debate over a strategy beyond that by shifting the burden of enforcing the United Nations Security Council resolution authorizing force on to France, Britain and other allies, including Arab nations like Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which on Thursday said that it would contribute warplanes to the effort. In other words, the American exit strategy is not necessarily the coalition's exit strategy.

"We didn't want to get sucked into an operation with uncertainty at the end," the senior administration official said. "In some ways, how it turns out is not on our shoulders."

Even so, no matter who is in charge American aircraft and warships will continue to support the campaigns for weeks or months, conducting surveillance, refueling and search and rescue operations that the United States is better able to do. And in the event that the allied mission goes badly awry, there would be little doubt that the American forces would return to the fight.

Steven Lee Myers reported from Washington, and David D. Kirkpatrick from Tripoli, Libya. Eric Schmitt and Mark Landler contributed reporting from Washington.

EU-Gipfel beschließt Reformpaket für den Euro

Die EU-Staats- und Regierungschefs haben am Donnerstag in Brüssel weitreichende Reformen für den Euro beschlossen: So wird etwa der Rettungsschirm für hochverschuldete Euro-Länder mit mehr Geld ausgestattet und dauerhaft eingerichtet.



Der Euro soll mithilfe der Reformen krisenfest werden

24. März 2011

Mehr Geld, härtere Strafen und eine abgestimmte Wirtschaftspolitik - mit diesen Schritten will die EU neue Schuldenkrisen verhindern. Die EU-Staats- und Regierungschefs beschlossen am Donnerstag in Brüssel weitreichende Reformen für den Euro. Allerdings blieb die von Deutschland geforderte Nachbesserung beim neuen Rettungsschirm ESM zunächst noch offen. Beamte aus den 17 Euro-Ländern verhandelten am Abend über diesen Sonderwunsch. „Das halten wir aber eher für ein technisches Problem“, sagte ein Diplomat. „Das ist lösbar.“

Die Bundesregierung will erreichen, dass die Raten für die Bareinlage zeitlich gestreckt und gleichmäßiger verteilt werden. Der Beschluss gilt als historisch: Es ist die größte Reform seit Einführung der Gemeinschaftswährung im Jahr 1999. Künftig wird der Rettungsschirm für pleitebedrohte Euro-Länder aufgestockt und dauerhaft aufgespannt. Dafür wird der EU-Vertrag entsprechend geändert.

Defizitsünder werden künftig strenger bestraft. Zudem wollen die 17 Euro-Länder ihre Wirtschaftspolitik abstimmen („Pakt für den Euro“). Das Ziel lautet, die Märkte zu beruhigen und neue Krisen wie in Griechenland oder Irland zu vermeiden. Allerdings überschattete die Krise Portugals, das wohl bald seine europäischen Partner um Notfallhilfe bitten muss, den Gipfel.

March 24, 2011

Islamist Group Is Rising Force in a New Egypt

By [MICHAEL SLACKMAN](#)

CAIRO — In post-revolutionary [Egypt](#), where hope and confusion collide in the daily struggle to build a new nation, religion has emerged as a powerful political force, following an uprising that was based on secular ideals. The [Muslim Brotherhood](#), an Islamist group once banned by the state, is at the forefront, transformed into a tacit partner with the military government that many fear will thwart fundamental changes.

It is also clear that the young, educated secular activists who initially propelled the nonideological revolution are no longer the driving political force — at least not at the moment.

As the best organized and most extensive opposition movement in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood was expected to have an edge in the contest for influence. But what surprises many is its link to a military that vilified it.

“There is evidence the Brotherhood struck some kind of a deal with the military early on,” said Elijah Zarwan, a senior analyst with the [International Crisis Group](#). “It makes sense if you are the military — you want stability and people off the street. The Brotherhood is one address where you can go to get 100,000 people off the street.”

There is a battle consuming Egypt about the direction of its revolution, and the military council that is now running the country is sending contradictory signals. On Wednesday, the council endorsed a plan to outlaw demonstrations and sit-ins. Then, a few hours later, the public prosecutor announced that the former interior minister and other security officials would be charged in the killings of hundreds during the protests.

Egyptians are searching for signs of clarity in such declarations, hoping to discern the direction of a state led by a secretive military council brought to power by a revolution based on demands for democracy, rule of law and an end to corruption.

“We are all worried,” said Amr Koura, 55, a television producer, reflecting the opinions of the secular minority. “The young people have no control of the revolution anymore. It was evident in the last few weeks when you saw a lot of bearded people taking charge. The youth are gone.”

The Muslim Brotherhood is also regarded warily by some religious Egyptians, who see it as an elitist, secret society. These suspicions have created potential opportunities for other parties.

About six groups from the ultraconservative Salafist school of Islam have also emerged in the era after President [Hosni Mubarak](#)’s removal, as well as a party called Al Wassat, intended as a more liberal alternative to the Brotherhood.

In the early stages of the revolution, the Brotherhood was reluctant to join the call for demonstrations. It jumped in only after it was clear that the protest movement had gained traction. Throughout, the Brotherhood kept a low profile, part of a survival instinct honed during decades of repression by the state.

The question at the time was whether the Brotherhood would move to take charge with its superior organizational structure. It now appears that it has.

“The Brotherhood didn’t want this revolution; it has never been a revolutionary movement,” said Mr. Zarwan of the International Crisis Group. “Now it has happened; they participated cautiously, and they realize they can set their sights higher.”

But in these early stages, there is growing evidence of the Brotherhood’s rise and the overpowering force of Islam.

When the new prime minister, [Essam Sharaf](#), [addressed the crowd in Tahrir Square](#) this month, Mohamed el-Beltagi, a prominent Brotherhood member, stood by his side. A Brotherhood member was also appointed to the committee that drafted amendments to the Constitution.

But the most obvious and consequential example was the [recent referendum](#) on the amendments, in the nation's first post-Mubarak balloting. The amendments essentially call for speeding up the election process so that parliamentary contests can be held before September, followed soon after by a presidential race. That expedited calendar is seen as giving an advantage to the Brotherhood and to the remnants of Mr. Mubarak's National Democratic Party, which have established national networks. The next Parliament will oversee drafting a new constitution.

Before the vote, Essam el-Erian, a Brotherhood leader and spokesman, [appeared on a popular television show](#), "The Reality," arguing for the government's position in favor of the proposal. With a record turnout, the vote was hailed as a success. But the "yes" campaign was based largely on a religious appeal: voters were warned that if they did not approve the amendments, Egypt would become a secular state.

"The problem is that our country will be without a religion," read a flier distributed in Cairo by a group calling itself the Egyptian Revolution Society. "This means that the call to the prayer will not be heard anymore like in the case of Switzerland, women will be banned from wearing the [hijab](#) like in the case of France," it said, referring to the Muslim head scarf. "And there will be laws that allow men to get married to men and women to get married to women like in the case of America."

A banner hung by the Muslim Brotherhood in a square in Alexandria instructed voters that it was their "religious duty" to vote "yes" on the amendments.

In the end, 77.2 percent of those who voted said yes.

This is not to say that the Brotherhood is intent on establishing an Islamic state. From the first days of the protests, Brotherhood leaders proclaimed their dedication to religious tolerance and a democratic and pluralist form of government. They said they would not offer a candidate for president, that they would contest only a bit more than a third of the total seats in Parliament, and that Coptic Christians and women would be welcomed into the political party affiliated with the movement.

None of that has changed, Mr. Erian, the spokesman, said in an interview. "We are keen to spread our ideas and our values," he said. "We are not keen for power."

He would not comment on whether the Brotherhood had an arrangement with the military, but he said the will of the people to shift toward Islam spoke for itself and was a sign of Egypt's emerging democratic values. "Don't trust the intellectuals, liberals and secularists," Mr. Erian said. "They are a minor group crying all the time. If they don't work hard, they have no future."

But the more secular forces say that what they need is time.

"I worry about going too fast towards elections, that the parties are still weak," said Nabil Ahmed Helmy, former dean of the Zagazig law school and a member of the National Council for Human Rights. "The only thing left right now is the Muslim Brotherhood. I do think that people are trying to take over the revolution."

Egypt is still a work in progress. Ola Shahba, 32, a member of a group in the youth coalition behind the protests, said, "After the results of the referendum, we need to be humble."

The coalition and others have said they see the overwhelming approval of the amendments and the rise of the Brotherhood as worrisome, and as evidence that more liberal forces need to organize in a more effective outreach campaign, and fast.

"Freedom is nice; so is democracy," said Rifaat Abdul Massih, 39, a construction worker. "But I'm a Christian, and we are a bit worried about the future. I voted 'no' to give more time to the secular parties. I don't want to have the Muslim Brotherhood here right away."

Nadim Audi contributed reporting.

L'intervention en Libye a évité "des milliers de morts" selon Sarkozy

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Le président français a justifié, vendredi 25 mars, l'intervention militaire en Libye en soulignant qu'elle avait "évitée des milliers et des milliers de morts", tout en assurant qu'elle pourrait cesser dès que les forces pro-Kadhafi rentreraient dans leurs casernes. Lors d'une conférence de presse en marge d'un sommet européen à Bruxelles, Nicolas Sarkozy a insisté sur le fait qu'il fallait "éviter les morts de la folie barbare d'un dictateur".

Selon lui, "si la coalition n'avait pas agi – c'était une affaire d'heures, d'un très petit nombre d'heures – la population de Benghazi aurait été victime d'un massacre". Nicolas Sarkozy a raconté avoir évoqué devant ses homologues européens "ce qui s'était passé à Srebrenica", en juillet 1995. "Huit mille personnes ont été assassinées (...) parce que la communauté internationale n'avait pas pris à l'époque les mesures pour empêcher ce massacre" de musulmans bosniaques par des Serbes. "Tant que la population [libyenne] sera sous la menace de tanks, d'avions, nous serons là", a également affirmé M. Sarkozy, refusant toutefois de donner une date butoir pour la fin de l'opération.

Celle-ci n'a pas pour but de destituer Kadhafi, a-t-il assuré. L'opération peut prendre fin "à la minute où les forces de Kadhafi retournent à leurs casernes (...) ce qui va au-delà dans mon esprit d'un simple cessez-le-feu". Il s'agit de mettre en œuvre "la résolution, toute la résolution, rien que la résolution" 1973 des Nations unies. "Nous n'irons pas au-delà de ce mandat", a dit le président français, soulignant qu'il n'y aurait "pas d'opérations au sol, ni maintenant, ni plus tard". Nicolas Sarkozy a ajouté que l'avion des forces libyennes, détruit au sol jeudi par un avion de chasse français juste après son atterrissage sur la base aérienne de Misrata (est), avait été abattu parce qu'il "se dirigeait pour frapper des populations innocentes". "Ce qui se passe en Libye crée une jurisprudence, et peut créer la confiance" chez les peuples arabes, a-t-il jugé.

"IMPASSE"

Le président français a également indiqué que les Européens lançaient "un appel" à tous ceux qui en Libye, "veulent abandonner M. Kadhafi dans ses projets fous et meurtriers" indiquant qu'ils "peuvent participer à la construction d'une nouvelle Libye démocratique". "Il y a le Conseil national de transition, très courageux, que nous appelons à s'élargir, il y a les chefs de tribus et puis des personnalités qui ont été associées au régime de M. Kadhafi et qui sont lucides et qui doivent considérer que la permanence du système Kadhafi conduit la Libye à une impasse", a-t-il ajouté.

Par ailleurs, l'Union européenne s'est dite prête jeudi soir à bloquer tous les revenus pétroliers et gaziers du régime de Mouammar Kadhafi, pour le priver de moyens de recruter des mercenaires notamment, et a lancé un appel à la communauté internationale pour qu'elle fasse de même. "L'Union européenne est prête à engager et à adopter de nouvelles sanctions, y compris des mesures pour s'assurer que les revenus du pétrole et du gaz n'atteignent pas le régime de Khadafi", ont affirmé les dirigeants européens dans une déclaration adoptée à l'unanimité. En outre, ses Etats membres "vont faire des propositions similaires au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU", souligne leur texte. Cette mesure est nécessaire "afin de s'assurer que Kadhafi ne paye pas ses mercenaires avec les ressources pétrolières", a expliqué le président français Nicolas Sarkozy. Il faut faire en sorte que "l'argent des Libyens" ne soit pas détourné, a-t-il dit.

Some Weigh Restructuring Portugal's Debt

By [LONDON THOMAS Jr.](#)

LONDON — As Europe struggles to come to grips with its debt crisis, which has deepened with the collapse of Portugal's government after it pushed for yet another round of budget cuts, three numbers stand out: 12.4, 9.8 and 7.8.

Those are the interest rates currently paid on 10-year government bonds for Greece, Ireland and Portugal. That they remain so high — compared with just 3.24 percent on German bonds — shows that investors remain unconvinced that Europe's haphazard strategy for bailing out troubled, highly indebted countries has succeeded a year after it began.

As heads of state huddled in Brussels on Thursday, with a possible rescue of Portugal on their minds after similar bailouts of Greece and Ireland, the question remained: would Europe accept a resolution it has long resisted — forcing investors to take a loss on their bond holdings to keep the crisis from spreading?

While European stocks were stable on Thursday, credit markets remained uneasy, as the ratings agency [Fitch](#) downgraded Portuguese government debt and [Moody's](#) de-rated 30 banks in Spain. If investors become more nervous about Spain — with a much bigger economy than Portugal's, with higher levels of bank debt — the relative calm of the last couple of months could evaporate.

A bailout of Portugal — perhaps to the tune of 80 billion euros (\$113 billion) — remains the most likely if not the safest possibility, because it could prove to be another stop-gap measure that might not keep the crisis from spreading.

As the number crunchers from the [European Central Bank](#), tax experts from the [International Monetary Fund](#) and other members of the bailout bureaucracy prepare to descend upon Portugal, preaching more budgetary pain and sacrifice, some economists argue that the smarter approach would be to restructure Portugal's existing debt instead of piling more of it on.

While it may be too soon for final judgment, these economists note that the early returns on the 200 billion euros used to finance Greece and Ireland are less than promising. Both countries continue to struggle to generate the cash to become solvent again despite getting support from their European partners.

In Greece, the central bank is forecasting that unemployment will hit 16.5 percent this year. Support for the Socialist government of [George Papandreou](#) and his reforms continues to erode, with a recent poll showing that just 35 percent of Greeks would vote for him again.

In Ireland, it now seems that the banks whose bad lending brought the country to its knees may need even more than the 35 billion euros already allocated to them by the [European Commission](#) and the I.M.F.

For proof that the market sees a debt restructuring as inevitable, interest rates on 10-year bonds for Greece and Ireland are higher now than when those countries received their bailout money.

Finally, in Portugal, after four cost-cutting austerity packages that have covered the usual areas like pension reform, spending reductions and tax increases, the people have had enough.

The lesson is clear, argues Barry Eichengreen, an economist and an expert on [the euro](#) and its origins — sustained austerity that is not supplemented by some form of debt reduction in which the holders of bank or government debt are forced to take a loss is not just unworkable but unfair as well.

“When you reduce the incomes of the people who service the debt but you don't reduce the incomes of the bondholders, you won't reduce the level of debt,” he said. “Some might call it shared sacrifice, but some people are not sharing.”

While the argument against restructuring has been that the risks of contagion are too high, it is becoming increasingly clear that the real reason behind Europe's reluctance to accept losses on Greek, Irish and Portuguese debt is that the cost to European banks would be prohibitive.

This week, [Standard & Poor's](#) estimated that in a worst case of severe economic contractions in Greece, Ireland, Spain and Portugal, banks in Western Europe would need to raise 250 billion euros — more than half the amount in the European Financial Stability Facility.

Even so, the [European Union](#) remains unwilling to confront this issue head on. With its first stress test for its banks having been widely ridiculed, it has embarked on a second one. In light of the optimistic assumptions it is making on the value of Greek and Portuguese debt, this round is unlikely to be seen as much of an improvement.

“The banks are obviously putting pressure on Europe to not restructure,” said Raoul Ruparel, an analyst at Open Europe, a Europe-focused research organization based in London. “But there is no real reason to impose such a cost on taxpayers when investors and banks have the ability to absorb these costs.”

In a [report he published](#) this week, Mr. Ruparel estimated that a bailout of Portugal would cost as much as 80 billion euros. It is an affordable figure, and that has been reflected in the lack of reaction from global markets and the euro as the Portuguese crisis has worsened.

But, he argues, a cheaper way to attack the problem would be to go to the root of the issue and restructure the country's debt — a form of default, because it would mean reducing the debt or easing the payment terms, or both — and use a smaller amount of public money to help the process.

At 75 percent of gross domestic product, Portugal's debt is not as high as Greece's. But its laggardly growth rate (the weakest in the euro zone) and its terrible competitive position relative to Germany make raising the money needed to refinance its obligations extremely difficult. That amount is estimated to be 25 percent of its output for this year.

Even with money coming in from a bailout, taxpayers will be responsible for an even higher level of debt, as in Greece. Starting in 2014, that country must come up with cash equal to 8 percent of its national income to pay its annual interest cost.

In a fixed currency zone, where countries do not have the luxury of devaluing, no country has produced that type of surplus via tax increases and spending and wage cuts.

“It would be unprecedented,” said Mr. Eichengreen, the economist. “But then the euro zone itself is unprecedented.”

A Radical Kind of Reactor

By [KEITH BRADSHER](#)

SHIDAO, China — While engineers at Japan's stricken nuclear power plant struggle to keep its uranium fuel rods from melting down, engineers in China are building a radically different type of reactor that some experts say offers a safer nuclear alternative.

The technology will be used in two reactors here on a peninsula jutting into the Yellow Sea, where the Chinese government is expected to let construction proceed even as the world debates the wisdom of nuclear power.

Rather than using conventional fuel rod assemblies of the sort leaking radiation in Japan, each packed with nearly 400 pounds of uranium, the Chinese reactors will use hundreds of thousands of billiard-ball-size fuel elements, each cloaked in its own protective layer of graphite.

The coating moderates the pace of nuclear reactions and is meant to ensure that if the plant had to be shut down in an emergency, the reaction would slowly stop on its own and not lead to a meltdown.

The reactors will also be cooled by nonexplosive helium gas instead of depending on a steady source of water — a critical problem with the damaged reactors at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi power plant. And unlike those reactors, the Chinese reactors are designed to gradually dissipate heat on their own, even if coolant is lost.

If the new plants here prove viable, China plans to build dozens more of them in coming years.

The technology under construction here, known as a pebble-bed reactor, is not new. Germany, South Africa and the United States have all experimented with it, before abandoning it over technical problems or a lack of financing.

But as in many other areas of alternative energy, including solar panels and [wind turbines](#), China is now taking the lead in actually building the next-generation technology. The government has paid for all of the research and development costs for the two pebble-bed reactors being built here, and will cover 30 percent of the construction costs.

Despite Japan's crisis, China still plans to build as many as 50 nuclear reactors over the next five years — more than the rest of the world combined. Most of this next wave will be of more conventional designs.

But if the pebble-bed approach works as advertised, and proves cost effective, China hopes it can eventually adopt the technology on a broad scale to make nuclear power safer and more feasible as it deals with the world's fastest growing economy and the material expectations of its 1.3 billion people.

Western environmentalists are divided on the safety of pebble-bed nuclear technology.

Thomas B. Cochran, the senior scientist on nuclear power for the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#), an American group, said that such reactors would probably be less dangerous than current nuclear plants, and might be better for the environment than [coal](#)-fired plants.

“Over all, in terms of design,” he said, “it would appear to be safer, with the following caveat: the safety of any nuclear plant is not just a function of the design but also of the safety culture of the plant.”

The executives overseeing construction of the new Chinese reactors say that engineers are already being trained to oversee the extensively computerized controls for the plant, using a simulator at a test reactor that has been operating for a decade near Beijing, apparently without mishap.

But [Greenpeace](#), the international environmentalist group, opposes pebble-bed nuclear reactors, questioning whether any nuclear technology can be truly safe. Wrapping the uranium fuel in graphite greatly increases the volume of radioactive waste eventually requiring disposal, said Heinz Smital, a Greenpeace nuclear technology specialist in Germany.

But he said the waste is far less radioactive per ton than spent uranium fuel rods — one of the big sources of trouble at the Fukushima Daiichi plant.

China is building a repository for high-level nuclear waste, like conventional fuel rods, in the country's arid west. But the far less radioactive spheres, or pebbles, like those from the Shidao reactors will not require such specialized storage; China plans to store the used pebbles initially at the power plants, and later at lower-level radioactive waste disposal sites near the reactors.

Whatever fears the rest of the world may have about China's nuclear ambitions, the environmental cost-benefit analysis contains at least one potential positive: More nukes would let China reduce the heavy reliance on coal and other fossil fuels that now make it the world's biggest emitter of global-warming gases.

"China epitomizes the stark choices that we face globally in moving away from current forms of coal-based electricity," said Jonathan Sinton, the top China specialist at the International Energy Agency in Paris. "Nuclear is an essential alternative" to coal, he said. "It's the only one that can provide the same quality of electricity at a similar scale in the medium and long term."

Chinese leaders have been largely unwilling to engage in the global debate on [climate change](#). But they have made a priority of reducing urban air pollution — which kills thousands of people every year and is largely caused by burning coal — and of improving mine safety. Coal mining accidents killed more than 2,400 people in China last year alone.

China's biggest electric company, the state-owned Huaneng Group, now aims to prove that the technology can work on a commercial scale by building the two pebble-bed reactors — each capable of meeting the residential power needs of an American city of 75,000 to 100,000 people. The reactors are expected to go into operation in about four years.

The plants' foundations have already been laid, their steel reinforcing bars pointing skyward, on a desolate landscape dominated by thatch-roofed huts and last season's cornfields. Chinese safety regulations require that all nuclear plants be located at least 30 miles from the nearest city, in this case Rongcheng, which has a population of one million.

It was only three days after a tsunami swamped Japan's Fukushima Daiichi plant that China's legislature approved its five-year plan calling for dozens of new nuclear reactors. As the severity of that crisis became evident, Beijing said it would "temporarily suspend" the approval of new nuclear reactors, but would allow construction to proceed at more than two dozen other nuclear projects already under way.

By coincidence, China's cabinet and its national energy bureau had both given final approval for the pebble-bed reactors here in Shidao in the two weeks before the earthquake, said Xu Yuanhui, the father of China's pebble-bed nuclear program.

China's nuclear safety agency has met since the Japanese earthquake and reviewed the Shidao's project plans and site preparation, and has indicated it will be the next project to receive safety clearance.

"The conclusion is clear that it is all ready to start to pour concrete," said Dr. Xu, a former Tsinghua University professor who is now the vice general manager of Chinergy, the contractor building the reactors here.

Germany led the initial research into pebble-bed nuclear reactors and built its own research version in the 1960s. That reactor closed after an accident, caused by a jammed fuel pebble that released traces of radiation — coincidentally nine days after the Chernobyl accident in 1986, at a time of greatly increased worry about nuclear safety. Dr. Xu said that China, learning from the German mishap, had designed its reactors to keep the pebbles from jamming.

South Africa tried hard until last summer to build a pebble-bed reactor but ran into serious cost overruns.

In the United States, the federal government and companies have spent heavily on pebble-bed research. But there has been little appetite for actually building new nuclear reactors — of any sort — since the Three Mile Island accident in 1979.

“The Chinese had a determination to build, to show the technology to work, and a commitment to get it done,” said Andrew Kadak, a [Massachusetts Institute of Technology](#) nuclear engineer specializing in pebble-bed reactors. “In the U.S. we didn’t have, and still don’t have, the commitment.”

The Austerity Delusion

By [PAUL KRUGMAN](#)

Portugal's government has just fallen in a dispute over austerity proposals. Irish bond yields have topped 10 percent for the first time. And the British government has just marked its economic forecast down and its deficit forecast up.

What do these events have in common? They're all evidence that slashing spending in the face of high unemployment is a mistake. Austerity advocates predicted that spending cuts would bring quick dividends in the form of rising confidence, and that there would be few, if any, adverse effects on growth and jobs; but they were wrong.

It's too bad, then, that these days you're not considered serious in Washington unless you profess allegiance to the same doctrine that's failing so dismally in Europe.

It was not always thus. Two years ago, faced with soaring unemployment and large budget deficits — both the consequences of a severe financial crisis — most advanced-country leaders seemingly understood that the problems had to be tackled in sequence, with an immediate focus on creating jobs combined with a long-run strategy of deficit reduction.

Why not slash deficits immediately? Because tax increases and cuts in government spending would depress economies further, worsening unemployment. And cutting spending in a deeply depressed economy is largely self-defeating even in purely fiscal terms: any savings achieved at the front end are partly offset by lower revenue, as the economy shrinks.

So jobs now, deficits later was and is the right strategy. Unfortunately, it's a strategy that has been abandoned in the face of phantom risks and delusional hopes. On one side, we're constantly told that if we don't slash spending immediately we'll end up just like Greece, unable to borrow except at exorbitant interest rates. On the other, we're told not to worry about the impact of spending cuts on jobs because fiscal austerity will actually create jobs by raising confidence.

How's that story working out so far?

Self-styled deficit hawks have been crying wolf over U.S. interest rates more or less continuously since the financial crisis began to ease, taking every uptick in rates as a sign that markets were turning on America. But the truth is that rates have fluctuated, not with debt fears, but with rising and falling hope for economic recovery. And with full recovery still seeming very distant, rates are lower now than they were two years ago.

But couldn't America still end up like Greece? Yes, of course. If investors decide that we're a banana republic whose politicians can't or won't come to grips with long-term problems, they will indeed stop buying our debt. But that's not a prospect that hinges, one way or another, on whether we punish ourselves with short-run spending cuts.

Just ask the Irish, whose government — having taken on an unsustainable debt burden by trying to bail out runaway banks — tried to reassure markets by imposing savage austerity measures on ordinary citizens. The same people urging spending cuts on America cheered. "Ireland offers an admirable lesson in fiscal responsibility," declared Alan Reynolds of the Cato Institute, who said that the spending cuts had removed fears over Irish solvency and predicted rapid economic recovery.

That was in June 2009. Since then, the interest rate on Irish debt has doubled; Ireland's unemployment rate now stands at 13.5 percent.

And then there's the British experience. Like America, Britain is still perceived as solvent by financial markets, giving it room to pursue a strategy of jobs first, deficits later. But the government of Prime Minister David Cameron chose instead to move to immediate, unforced austerity, in the belief that private spending would more than make up for the government's pullback. As I like to put it, the Cameron plan was based on belief that the confidence fairy would make everything all right.

But she hasn't: British growth has stalled, and the government has marked up its deficit projections as a result.

Which brings me back to what passes for budget debate in Washington these days.

A serious fiscal plan for America would address the long-run drivers of spending, above all health care costs, and it would almost certainly include some kind of tax increase. But we're not serious: any talk of using Medicare funds effectively is met with shrieks of "death panels," and the official G.O.P. position — barely challenged by Democrats — appears to be that nobody should ever pay higher taxes. Instead, all the talk is about short-run spending cuts.

In short, we have a political climate in which self-styled deficit hawks want to punish the unemployed even as they oppose any action that would address our long-run budget problems. And here's what we know from experience abroad: The confidence fairy won't save us from the consequences of our folly.

So funktioniert der Euro-Krisenfonds

Bisher war der europäische Hilfsfonds nur vorübergehend angelegt. Ab 2013 wird es einen dauerhaften Krisenmechanismus geben. Deutschland muss dafür knapp 22 Milliarden Euro zahlen. Werner Mussler erklärt die Funktionsweise des Rettungstopfes.

22. März 2011

Überraschend schnell haben sich die EU-Finanzminister auf die Regeln für den endgültigen Euro-Krisenfonds, den Europäischen Stabilitätsmechanismus (ESM), geeinigt. Er wird den jetzigen, ursprünglich auf drei Jahre befristeten Hilfsmechanismus EFSF (Europäische Finanzstabilisierungsfazilität) Mitte 2013 ablösen.

Kapitalstruktur: Der ESM erhält eine Kapitalbasis von 700 Milliarden Euro. Das ist notwendig, damit der Fonds wie beschlossen 500 Milliarden Euro verleihen kann. Die Ratingagenturen haben Sicherheiten verlangt, um dem ESM das erwünschte Top-Rating (AAA) zu verleihen. Besonders wichtig dafür war, dass die Euro-Staaten in den ESM 80 Milliarden Euro bar als Grundkapital einzahlen. Der ESM-Vorgänger EFSF hat keine solchen Bareinlagen erhalten. Von den 80 Milliarden Euro soll die Hälfte bis 2013 zur Verfügung stehen, der Rest in drei Jahrestanchen bis 2016. Für die restlichen 620 Milliarden Euro stehen die Länder des Euroraums mit Garantien oder abrufbarem Kapital ein. Die Euro-Staaten müssten dieses weitere Geld (nach ihrem jeweiligen Kapitalanteil) zuschießen, wenn es zu Forderungsausfällen käme.

Lastenverteilung: Die Beiträge zum ESM werden nach einem Schlüssel ermittelt, der sich weitgehend am Kapitalschlüssel der Europäischen Zentralbank (EZB) orientiert. Vier osteuropäische Staaten haben allerdings eine Modifikation zu ihren Gunsten erreicht, weil ihr Beitrag sonst zu hoch geworden wäre. Estland hatte beispielsweise ins Feld geführt, dass es bei Gültigkeit des EZB-Schlüssels 9 Prozent seiner jährlichen Wirtschaftsleistung hätte beitragen müssen. Wegen dieses Nachlasses hat sich der deutsche Beitrag gegenüber dem EZB-Schlüssel von 27,06 auf 27,15 Prozent erhöht.

Deutschland: Deutschland trägt 27,15 Prozent der Bareinzahlungen und des abrufbaren Kapitals oder der Garantien. Damit werden Einzahlungen von 21,7 Milliarden Euro fällig, verteilt auf 10,85 Milliarden Euro bis 2013 und drei weitere Jahresraten von je 3,62 Milliarden Euro bis 2016. Hinzu kommen 168,3 Milliarden Euro, für die Deutschland mit abrufbarem Kapital oder Garantien eintreten muss.

Budgetwirksamkeit: Die Kapitaleinzahlungen in den ESM werden laut Eurostat auf die Staatsschuld in der Maastrichter Abgrenzung angerechnet, nicht aber auf das Staatsdefizit. Auch für die deutsche Schuldenbremse sind sie nicht relevant. Das abrufbare Kapital und die Garantien werden nur dann budgetwirksam, wenn der ESM sie abrufen, um Forderungsausfälle aufzufangen.

IWF-Beteiligung: Wie bisher soll der Internationale Währungsfonds (IWF) die gesamte verfügbare Kreditsumme um die Hälfte erhöhen. Zu den ESM-Krediten von 500 Milliarden Euro sollen also weitere 250 Milliarden Euro hinzukommen.

Vergabe: Der ESM darf nur Kredite an notleidende Mitgliedstaaten vergeben, wenn dies nötig ist, um die „Finanzstabilität des Euro-Raums als Ganzes“ zu sichern. Dies ist eine von der Bundesregierung durchgesetzte Formulierung. Außerdem ist die Kreditgewährung an strenge wirtschafts- und finanzpolitische Auflagen geknüpft.

Beteiligung privater Gläubiger: In allen von den Euro-Staaten von 2013 an ausgegebenen Anleihen werden sogenannte „collective action clauses“ (CAC) eingefügt. Auf Basis dieser CAC können die privaten Gläubiger, wenn ein Land zahlungsunfähig ist, eine Änderung der Zahlungsbedingungen beschließen, etwa die Laufzeit der Anleihen verlängern oder auf einen Teil der Forderungen verzichten. Das ist aber nur für den unwahrscheinlichen Fall vorgesehen, dass ein Land aufgrund einer „Schuldentragfähigkeitsanalyse“ tatsächlich als insolvent und nicht nur als illiquide eingestuft wird.

Zinsen: Die Berechnung orientiert sich an den Konditionen, die für Hilfskredite des Internationalen Währungsfonds (IWF) gelten. Die Zinsen fallen damit niedriger aus als die des ESM-Vorgängers EFSF. Für Kredite bis drei Jahren Laufzeit werden auf die Beschaffungskosten 200 Basispunkte aufgeschlagen, für längere Laufzeiten werden weitere 100 Basispunkte fällig.

Vorzugsstatus: Gegenüber allen anderen Gläubigern mit Ausnahme des IWF erhält der ESM einen Vorzugsstatus. Seine Forderungen müssen also bevorzugt bedient werden.

Organisation: Der ESM soll eine neue internationale Finanzinstitution nach dem Vorbild des IWF werden. Sie wird von einem Gouverneursrat geführt, dessen 17 stimmberechtigte Mitglieder die Finanzminister des Euroraums sind. Beratend sind der EU-Währungskommissar und der Präsident der Europäischen Zentralbank (EZB) vertreten. Das Gremium bestimmt einstimmig über die Vergabe, Höhe und Bedingungen von Finanzhilfen. Alle anderen Entscheidungen sollen mit qualifizierter Mehrheit (80 Prozent) fallen; die Stimmverteilung folgt dem Kapitalschlüssel. Sitz des ESM ist Luxemburg.

EFSF: Der jetzige Krisenfonds, die Europäische Finanzstabilitätsfazilität (EFSF), arbeitet bis Juni 2013 weiter. Danach soll er nicht direkt in den ESM überführt werden, sondern die bis dahin laufenden Kredite und Anleihen vollends abwickeln. Immer noch strittig ist, wann und wie die Kreditsumme des EFSF auf sein nominales Volumen von 440 Milliarden Euro aufgestockt werden soll. Die Staats- und Regierungschefs des Euro-Raums haben die Aufstockung im Grundsatz zwar beschlossen. Finnland sträubt sich aber weiterhin dagegen, die Bundesregierung will das Thema zumindest bis zu den Landtagswahlen am Wochenende unter der Decke halten.

Text: F.A.Z.

Text: FAZ.NET

Beiträge zum künftigen Europäischen Stabilitätsmechanismus (ESM)

Summe ESM: 700 Mrd. €	Verteilungsschlüssel der Euro-Länder in Prozent	Euro-BIP- Anteil in % ¹⁾	Bareinzahlung in Mrd. Euro	Bürgschaften oder abrufbares Kapital in Milliarden Euro	
620 Mrd. € Bürgschaften oder abrufbares Kapital	Deutschland	27,1	(27,2)	21,7	168,3
	Frankreich	20,4	(21,2)	16,3	126,4
	Italien	17,9	(16,9)	14,3	111,1
	Spanien	11,9	(11,6)	9,5	73,8
	Niederlande	5,7	(6,4)	4,6	35,4
	Belgien	3,5	(3,8)	2,8	21,6
	Griechenland	2,8	(2,5)	2,3	17,5
	Österreich	2,8	(3,1)	2,2	17,3
	Portugal	2,5	(1,9)	2,0	15,6
	Finnland	1,8	(2,0)	1,4	11,1
	Irland	1,6	(1,7)	1,3	9,9
	Slowakei	0,8	(0,7)	0,7	5,1
	Slowenien	0,4	(0,4)	0,3	2,7
	Luxemburg	0,3	(0,4)	0,2	1,6
	Zypern	0,2	(0,2)	0,2	1,2
	80 Mrd. € Bareinzahlungen	Estland	0,2	(0,2)	0,1
	Malta	0,1	(0,1)	0,1	0,5

1) BIP-Anteil des Landes am BIP des Euro-Raums 2010.

Quellen: EZB; Ameco; DG ECFIN; eigene Berechnungen / F.A.Z.-Grafik Brocker

Transferunion

Der dauerhafte Rettungsfonds für Schuldenstaaten öffnet das Tor zu Transfers in unbekannter Höhe. Als Solidarität von Starken für Schwache wird das bisweilen verkauft. Aber was ist daran solidarisch, wenn ein armes Land wie Slowenien, das sich an die Regeln gehalten hat, für ein reiches Land wie Irland zahlen muss, das die Regeln gebrochen hat?

Von Holger Steltzner

24. März 2011

Die Geschichte des Euro ist eine Reihe gebrochener Versprechen. Dem Euro müsse die politische Union folgen, weil sonst die Währungsunion nicht funktioniere. Das versprochen die politischen Gründungsväter zur Einführung des Euro. Die Idee einer politischen Union ging im EU-Erweiterungsrausch unter – und die Währungsunion geriet in die Krise. Kein Euro-Rettungspolitiker hat diesen Konstruktionsfehler benannt und für eine politische Union geworben.

Wie weit Europa von einer gemeinsamen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik heute entfernt ist, lässt sich im libyschen Luftraum beobachten. Der Euro werde die Wirtschaftsstrukturen im Euroraum harmonisieren, versprach man. In der Krise zeigt sich das Gegenteil. Niemand weiß, wie Griechenland seine viel zu hohe Staatsschuld tragen und wie die hellenische Wirtschaft wieder wettbewerbsfähig werden soll. Die irische Bankenkrise harrt ebenfalls noch der Lösung, während Portugal tiefer in den Strudel aus steigenden Schulden und sinkender Wirtschaftskraft gerät.

Deutschland bürgt für 168 und zahlt fast 22 Milliarden Euro

Die Antwort der Gemeinschaft auf die Krise ist kein Neubau, sondern der Anbau eines dauerhaften Rettungsfonds an das alte, schiefe Fundament der Währungsunion. Auch das ist ein Wortbruch. Den Rettungsschirm, der Euro-Länder in Not vorübergehend mit Zeit und Geld versorgen sollte, gebe es nur befristet, hatten Finanzminister Schäuble und Bundeskanzlerin Merkel versprochen, als sie das Verbot der Haftung eines Eurolandes für die Schulden eines anderen kassierten (siehe [Im Gespräch: Wolfgang Schäuble: „Die Rettungsschirme laufen aus“](#)).

Den ewigen Krisenfonds werde es nur geben, wenn die Wirtschaftspolitik im Euroraum künftig deutschen Prinzipien folge, hatte Frau Merkel danach versprochen, als sie die Partnerländer mit ihrem „Pakt für Wettbewerbsfähigkeit“ schockte, aus dem mittlerweile so viel heiße Luft entwichen ist, dass er als „Pakt für den Euro“ für alle unverbindlich genug ist. Vergessen ist auch das Versprechen, das koste kein Geld. Auf dem Preisschild des Rettungsfonds steht der unfassbare Betrag von 700 Milliarden Euro (80 Milliarden als Bareinlage und 620 als Garantie oder abrufbares Kapital). Deutschland bürgt für 168 und zahlt fast 22 Milliarden Euro als Bareinlage – Geld, das man leihen muss und das für soziale Zwecke oder anderes nicht zur Verfügung steht.

Der Markt als Kontrollinstanz wird ausgeschaltet

Es werde mit der christlich-liberalen Regierung keine Vergemeinschaftung von Schulden in Europa geben, hat Frau Merkel nun in ihrer Regierungserklärung vor dem EU-Krisengipfel versprochen, auf dem gegen den erklärten Willen der schwarz-gelben Bundestagsfraktionen der direkte Kauf von Staatsanleihen durch den Krisenfonds beschlossen werden soll. Was soll das denn sonst sein, wenn nicht ein Schritt zur Vergemeinschaftung von Staatsschulden? Wie werden sich wohl die Parlamentarier fühlen, wenn sie die Gipfelbeschlüsse später abnicken dürfen?

Das neue, komplexe Regelwerk für die Währungsunion ist im Kern nichts anderes als eine auf Dauer angelegte Krisenhilfe. Der Euro-Stabilitätspakt hat nun zwar ein oder zwei Zähne mehr, da jedoch bei Verstößen keine automatischen Sanktionen folgen, hat der Pakt so wenig Biss wie zuvor. Indem der Krisenfonds Staatsanleihen mit schlechter Bonität aufkauft, wird der Markt als Kontrollinstanz ausgeschaltet. Länder, die über ihre Verhältnisse leben, werden nicht mehr mit hohen Zinsen vom Markt bestraft, sondern vom Krisenfonds mit Geld zu Vorzugszinsen belohnt. Natürlich sind die Auflagen des Fonds unbequem. Doch solange in Form von politischen Tauschgeschäften potentielle Sünder über aktuelle Sünder richten sind diese allemal leichter zu tragen als die Zinsforderung des Kapitalmarkts.

So wird die Währungsunion zur Transferunion, mit Deutschland und Frankreich als Retter vom Dienst. Das ist entgegen anderslautender Beteuerungen kein Akt der Solidarität von Starken für Schwache. Was ist daran solidarisch, wenn ein armes Land wie Slowenien, das sich an die Regeln gehalten hat, für ein reiches Land wie Irland zahlen muss, das die Regeln gebrochen hat? Selbstverständlich gibt es in der EU seit jeher Finanztransfers wie die Agrarsubventionen oder die Strukturhilfen. Aber diese Mittel waren in der Summe immer eng begrenzt und im Zweck bestimmt. Jetzt wird das Tor zu Transfers in unbekannter Dimension aufgestoßen. Selbst beste Euro-Schuldner wie Deutschland oder Frankreich müssen aufpassen, dass sie ihren guten Ruf am Markt auf Dauer nicht verlieren.

Völlig offen ist die Frage, was mit den in der Vergangenheit angehäuften Schuldenbergen geschehen soll. Die Beteiligung der privaten Gläubiger an den Kosten der Staatsschuldenkrise soll es erst in ferner Zukunft geben, wenn überhaupt. Wer glaubt, dass im Ernstfall davon Gebrauch gemacht wird, wenn Banken mal wieder mit dem Zusammenbruch drohen? Mit Marktwirtschaft hat das wenig zu tun, wenn Investoren Zinskupons einstreichen und der Steuerzahler die Rechnung begleicht, wenn es schiefgeht. Die dauerhafte Krisenhilfe löst nicht das Kernproblem des Euroraums. Es gibt nur eine Währung mit einem Notenbankzins für siebzehn Länder, deren Wirtschaftsentwicklung auseinander strebt. Das passt nicht.



F.A.Z.:

„Jede Wette, dass Ihr Vorschlag nicht verwirklicht und stattdessen der Rettungsschirm für die Euro-Länder verlängert wird.“

Schäuble:

„Solange Angela Merkel Bundeskanzlerin ist und ich Finanzminister bin, würden Sie diese Wette verlieren. Die Rettungsschirme laufen aus. Das haben wir klar vereinbart.“

Bundesfinanzminister Wolfgang Schäuble im Interview mit der F.A.Z vom 24. Juli 2010

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Text: F.A.Z.

03/24/2011 04:13 PM

Setback for Franco-German Relations

Paris and Berlin at Odds over Libya Operation

By [Philipp Wittrock](#) in Berlin

While France has eagerly taken a leading role in the operation against Moammar Gadhafi, Angela Merkel's government has been adamant that the German military will not participate. The two positions are causing a rift in Franco-German relations.

Anyone who mentions the name of the French president around members of Germany's governing coalition at the moment can expect to see plenty of irritated faces. Dubbed the "French general," Nicolas Sarkozy has already annoyed members of Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democrats and their coalition partner, the business-friendly Free Democrats, by not consulting anyone when he [sent his fighter jets to patrol the skies over Libya](#). Didn't the French president once allow "Brother Colonel" Moammar Gadhafi to pitch his Bedouin tent in Paris, they ask? Perhaps, they add, Monsieur Sarkozy wants that little snippet of information to be quickly forgotten -- along with his cosy relationships with other North African despots. Oh, and he is facing elections next year, as well: A determined military operation to defend human rights might do no harm in that respect.

There are not many people in Berlin who have good things to say about the country's western neighbor at the moment, despite the high value that is normally attached to good Franco-German relations. The military operation against the Libyan dictator has put a spanner in those particular works.

The German government considers the military action a mistake, hastily launched without a proper plan. The lack of preparation is, however, compensated for with plenty of rhetoric. France is determined to assume its "role in the face of history," Sarkozy declared. And he went further, cleverly portraying Germany as occupying an outsider role alongside China and Russia. And now Paris also wants to downgrade NATO to the role of a helper rather than giving it command of the operation.

The Paris leadership is getting on the nerves of many in Berlin. The feeling is so strong that FPD floor leader Birgit Homburger made her anger clear on Wednesday: "I cannot see how we can be criticized by those who go it alone themselves."

'Our Relationship Is Markedly Colder'

But the animosity is currently mutual. The French are disappointed with the [German abstention on the Libya resolution](#) in the UN Security Council. The *Le Monde* newspaper said the German government was "lacking solidarity or any maturity." Germany was giving the impression of being a freeloader who wanted to "harvest the fruits of the determination shown by the French, British and American allies without getting their hands dirty."

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe was more cautious with his words. "We would have wished that Germany would join us," he said. Other, anonymous sources, however, were far more explicit. "Angela Merkel will have to pay for this for a very long time," a French diplomat was quoted as saying by the newspaper *Le Parisien*. "Even if they receive the support of their own public, their international image will suffer, and our relationship is getting markedly colder." *Le Figaro* also quoted a disgruntled high-ranking French diplomat, who described Berlin's stance as "a big mistake which

will cost Germany dearly in political terms." The newspaper spoke of a "severe blow to the Franco-German friendship."

Officially, of course, there is no mention of such problems. Following the adoption of the UN resolution, Chancellor Angela Merkel rushed to the Libya summit meeting because she wanted to avoid the impression she was politically isolated. President Sarkozy did not say anything and welcomed Merkel as warmly as ever. The chancellor hastily insisted that the resolution was now "also our resolution" -- abstention or not. Germany naturally stood by its allies, she said. Nonetheless, it was noticeable that, out of the European leaders present, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk was the only other head of government who had not offered any military assistance.

Germany on the Sidelines

France will not go out of its way to make sure that Germany is involved in future planning of the operation in Libya. Sarkozy's diplomats are currently working hard in Brussels to prevent leadership of the military operation being transferred to NATO, something the Germans would welcome. Instead, Paris has organized its own political steering committee, which would include representation from all the parties involved in the operation, as well as the African Union and the Arab League. The first meeting will be held in London next Tuesday. The Germans will be on the sidelines.

The French government has tried to downplay the [disharmony](#). Foreign Minister Juppe said it was not the first time Germany and France had been at odds: "That has never put our fundamental solidarity in doubt." Europe Minister Laurent Wauquiez talked of the two countries having different views of the Libya issue. "Does this mean the end of Franco-German relations?" he asked. "Of course not!"

He is obviously right, but the relationship between the two countries is hardly going to improve any time soon. Perhaps Sarkozy and Merkel can start the process of making up on Thursday, when they will meet in Brussels for the [EU summit](#). Libya will take a back seat, with the final scope of the euro-zone rescue fund set to be top of the agenda. That, at least, is an area where Germany and France usually take a joint leading role.

There will, however, be another issue up for discussion which could cause further division between the two countries: the consequences of the nuclear emergency in Japan. The chancellor has announced a joint Franco-German initiative on nuclear power plant security. Sarkozy made clear, however, that he does not agree with [Merkel's sudden shutdowns of nuclear plants in Germany](#). "Phasing out nuclear power is not an option," he said.

03/23/2011 03:52 PM

Leading Climatologist on Fukushima

'We Are Looting the Past and Future to Feed the Present'

By Katrin Elger and Christian Schwägerl

Leading German climate scientist Hans Joachim Schellnhuber talks to SPIEGEL about the lessons of the Fukushima disaster, the future of nuclear energy in Germany and why our society needs to be transformed. "We consume as much oil in one year as was created in 5.3 million years," he warns.

SPIEGEL: Who or what is to blame for the nuclear catastrophe in [Fukushima](#)?

Hans Joachim Schellnhuber: The earthquake was merely the trigger. The crazy logic we apply in dealing with technical risks is to blame. We only protect ourselves against hazards to the extent that it's economically feasible at a given time, and to the extent to which they can be controlled within the normal operations of a company. But the Richter scale has no upper limit. Why is a Japanese nuclear power plant only designed to withstand a magnitude 8.2 earthquake, not to mention tsunamis?

SPIEGEL: Presumably because otherwise electricity from nuclear power would have been too expensive.

Schellnhuber: The entire affluence-based economic model of the postwar era, be it in Japan or here in Germany, is based on the idea that cheap energy and rising material consumption are supposed to make us happier and happier. This is why nuclear power plants are now being built in areas that are highly active geologically, and why we consume as much oil in one year as was created in 5.3 million years. We are looting both the past and the future to feed the excess of the present. It's the dictatorship of the here and now.

SPIEGEL: What's your alternative?

Schellnhuber: We have to stop constantly ignoring the things that are truly harmful to our society. This includes nuclear accidents, but also the prospect of the Earth becoming between 6 and 8 degrees Celsius (11 to 14 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer by the year 2200. Only when we have taken the possibility of maximum losses fully into account can we decide whether we even want a specific technology.

SPIEGEL: Up until now, you haven't been one of the vocal opponents of nuclear power.

Schellnhuber: But neither was I a supporter of nuclear power. My position was: Let's take advantage of the cost benefits of the existing nuclear plants to quickly develop renewable energy systems. It was my hope that something good would emerge from something bad.

SPIEGEL: How do you feel about the government's plans to [temporarily shut down seven nuclear power plants](#) in Germany?

Schellnhuber: It's the right thing to do. Something resembling what happened in Japan could also happen in Germany if one of the countless possible chains of unfortunate events were to occur. It's the unavoidability of the improbable. But the way the government approached the issue was not very beneficial for Germany's political culture.

SPIEGEL: Why?

Schellhuber: Last year they decided that German power plants are safe. This allows for only two possible conclusions: Either the full truth wasn't recognized at the time, in which case it was bad policy, or they are reacting in a purely opportunistic fashion now, against their better judgment. That's even worse policy.

SPIEGEL: Are you worried that the government's new anti-nuclear course will lead to higher CO2 emissions because more coal will be burned once again?

Schellhuber: Actually, I'm convinced that this is precisely what Chancellor Angela Merkel will not allow. Now everyone is starting to realize that society's entire fossil-nuclear operating system has no future and that massive investments have to be made in renewable sources of energy.

SPIEGEL: Do you feel that the government's abrupt change of course in relation to its energy policy is adequate?

Schellhuber: No. It can only be the beginning of a deep-seated shift. The German Advisory Council on Global Change, which I chair, will soon unveil a master plan for a transformation of society. Precisely because of Fukushima, we believe that a new basis of our coexistence is needed.

SPIEGEL: What does that mean?

Schellhuber: We need a social contract for the 21st century that seals the common desire to create a sustainable industrial metabolism. We must resolve, once and for all, to leave our descendants more than a legacy of nuclear hazards and climate change. This requires empathy across space and time. To promote this, the rights of future generations should be enshrined in the German constitution.

SPIEGEL: And specifically?

Schellhuber: For example, we have to stabilize energy consumption at a reasonable level. If we would finally start exploiting the full potential for energy efficiency in Germany, we could get by with at least 30 percent less energy input -- without being materially worse off.

SPIEGEL: How do you intend to convince society of the need for an upper limit to energy consumption?

Schellhuber: It can only be achieved with cultural change. To that end, society needs to have an entirely different discussion than before. This sort of change is one of the most difficult things I can imagine.

SPIEGEL: Belt-tightening hasn't exactly been popular in the past.

Schellhuber: All it costs is a few percentage points of economic output to turn away from the dangerous path that would otherwise lead to more nuclear accidents and unchecked climate change. Green investments would only delay the growth of affluence between now and the year 2100 by six to nine months. Is that really too high a price to pay?

SPIEGEL: Why is it that your messages haven't been all that well received until now?

Schellhuber: I'm neither a psychologist nor a sociologist. But my life experiences have shown that the love of convenience and ignorance are man's biggest character flaws. It's a potentially deadly mixture.

Interview conducted by Katrin Elger and Christian Schwägerl.

03/24/2011 09:10 AM

Prime Minister Resigns

EU Bailout Looms as Portugal Government Collapses

By [Stefan Schultz](#)

Portugal's Prime Minister Jose Socrates has resigned after the country's parliament rejected his latest package of austerity measures. His move makes it more likely that the cash-strapped nation will have to ask the European Union for a bailout.

Portuguese Prime Minister Jose Socrates resigned on Wednesday evening shortly after an austerity package proposed by his minority government was rejected by the Portuguese parliament. President Anibal Cavaco Silva announced in Lisbon late on Wednesday that Socrates had stepped down, after the prime minister had formally submitted his resignation to the head of state. Socrates, who belongs to the center-left Socialist Party, said that the political crisis would have "extremely serious consequences."

All of Portugal's five opposition parties rejected the austerity package, which was the country's fourth in 11 months. The opposition claimed that the measures, which included spending cuts and tax increases, were excessive. Socrates had earlier staked his political career on getting the budget passed, saying that [he would resign](#) if it was rejected.

The crisis increases the chances that the debt-plagued country will have to ask the European Union for a bailout, following in the footsteps of Greece and Ireland, which accepted EU help last year. Investors are also likely to wonder if Spain will become the next candidate for a bailout as a result. Socrates' resignation came on the eve of a crucial EU summit to discuss the euro crisis.

Opposition Saw Chance to Force Elections

Portugal's government crisis had been looming for some time. At the beginning of this year, political observers in the country were already predicting that the main opposition party, the center-right Social Democratic Party (PSD), would exploit the country's debt crisis to force early elections. Technically, that would only be possible after the president was sworn in, the daily newspaper *Público* wrote at the time.

The newspaper turned out to be right. On March 9, Anibal Cavaco Silva was sworn in for a second term in office, after being reelected on Jan. 23. A fierce political dispute broke out just a few days later. At the euro-zone summit in Brussels in mid-March, Prime Minister Socrates agreed on new austerity measures with the European Commission and the European Central Bank. The savings package was intended to reduce Portugal's deficit from the current level of around 7 percent of GDP to 4.6 percent by the end of the year.

Although Portugal's debt problems are not as great as those of Greece or Ireland, poor growth in recent years has made it vulnerable to contagion from the euro zone's debt crisis. Its budget deficit hit 9.3 percent of gross domestic product in 2009, way over the 3 percent threshold dictated under euro-zone rules.

The austerity measures included cuts to health care, social welfare spending and infrastructure investments amounting to 0.8 percent of GDP. Pensions would also have been frozen until 2013. The PSD heavily criticized Socrates for having negotiated the measures practically single-handedly with the EU and said that the pension freeze

was "anti-social." The opposition party, which had backed previous packages, threatened not to support the government in passing the austerity measures this time around.

The opposition parties appeared to be responding to the public mood in Portugal, which had turned against the belt-tightening. The government's efforts to sort out the country's finances with tax increases and cuts in welfare spending had led to a wave of strikes. Tens of thousands of people recently held protests against precarious working conditions, unemployment and the austerity measures.

'The Portuguese People Must Decide'

As head of a minority government, Socrates was dependent on opposition votes to get the budget through parliament. With no compromise in sight, the prime minister decided to stake his political fate on getting the new austerity package passed, and threatened to resign if it was rejected.

Responding to the threat, the PSD went on the offensive. "There is no way of avoiding the fact that the Portuguese people must ultimately decide," opposition leader Pedro Passos Coelho said on Monday evening, arguing in favor of early elections. Shortly afterwards, Finance Minister Fernando Teixeira dos Santos said that Portugal having to ask the EU for help could no longer be ruled out.

Some in Portugal felt that Socrates' resignation was already long overdue. "In the last year and a half, the government has not managed to restore confidence in Portugal's liquidity," said a source in the country's central bank. "It has got bogged down. A new government is needed."

Now the country is facing a period of uncertainty until that new government can take office. New elections will not be possible before the end of May at the earliest. According to the Portuguese constitution, there must be 55 days between the announcement of new elections and the actual vote.

Uncertain Times

During this time, however, Portugal's government will need to borrow more money. From now until June, some €9.2 billion (\$13 billion) of sovereign debt needs to be refinanced on the markets, of which €4.2 billion is due in April alone. Borrowing, however, might become unbearably expensive for the transitional government.

Teixeira dos Santos himself said in November that the country would hardly be able to service its debts if yields on its bonds rose to 7 percent. On Tuesday, with the government's collapse looming, yields on Portugal's five-year bonds temporarily rose to over 8 percent for the first time since Portugal joined the euro zone.

"The country is facing uncertain times. Risk premiums may continue to skyrocket," says economist Ricardo Reis of Columbia University.

Francesco Franco, an economics professor at Lisbon's New University, reaches a similar verdict. "I think markets have already discounted the political uncertainty, but rates could go even higher, even if it will not matter so much in practical terms as the ECB will most certainly play a prominent role," he says.

That is hardly surprising. It is unclear if the country will get a stable government after the elections. "Socrates is a strong election campaigner," said Joao Luis Cesar das Neves, a professor at the Catholic University of Portugal and a long-time government adviser. "Given all the government's setbacks, his popularity ratings are still remarkably high."

It could be that no party has a clear majority after the election. In that case, the most likely outcome would be a "grand" coalition between the two biggest parties, the Socialists and the PSD -- without Socrates, however.

Asking for EU Help Would Be Unpopular

Another problem for the country is that it will be particularly difficult to ask the EU for help during the election campaign. Technically, it would be possible: The Portuguese constitution explicitly states that a transitional government is allowed to make decisions that are absolutely necessary for the good of the country. The request for EU assistance would be such a case, because in the face of rising bond yields, Portugal would not be able to solve its financial problems any other way.

Politically, however, going to Brussels with the begging bowl would be problematic. "The euro rescue fund is highly unpopular in the country," says Eva Gaspar of the business newspaper *Jornal de Negócios*. No party would want to take such a step during the election campaign, she adds. At most, Socrates could try to portray EU assistance as unavoidable as a result of the political crisis and try to pin the blame on the opposition.

Intervention in Libya

Taking humanitarian justification seriously

The Economist Mar 23rd 2011, 14:06 by W.W. | IOWA CITY

AS MY colleague [explains](#), perceptions of "success" in war may or may not reflect reality. This led me to wonder how we might establish objective success in our Libyan adventure. Naturally, we need some standard of evaluation, and generally success is measured relative to a goal or a set of expectations. So it seems that whether or not America is *actually* successful in Libya, and not merely perceived to be successful, depends on what exactly it is that we are trying to do there. Unfortunately, this is not as clear as it might be.

As I suggested [in a prior post](#), it is easier to sell the public on "humanitarian intervention" than on "regime change", especially when that regime poses no threat to America or its allies. Consequently, it is not unreasonable to suspect that some among those who desire regime change for Libya publicly make a more palatable humanitarian case for war. Now, President Obama's case for intervention has been a humanitarian one, suggesting we should judge America's intervention in Libya by humanitarian standards. However, [as Mr Obama said yesterday in Santiago](#), "It is US policy that Qaddafi needs to go." Assuming that Mr Obama is, as he says, moved by humanitarian concern, it would seem he is convinced that his stated humanitarian goals cannot be achieved unless Mr Qaddafi's regime falls. This conviction, once expressed, strongly encourages the media and public to judge success or failure in Libya according to whether Mr Qaddafi holds or loses power. Nevertheless, the stated aim of allied attacks on Libyan targets remains humanitarian, and thus it is incumbent upon us to remain dogged in our insistence on the rigorous application of humanitarian standards of success.

Have you heard a persuasive case that Mr Qaddafi's ouster is necessary to achieve our humanitarian aim? I haven't. In order to make this case, one would have to take seriously the goals of reducing death and suffering, and it is by no means clear that these goals would be better met by deposing Mr Qaddafi than by, say, achieving and enforcing an immediate ceasefire that leaves Mr Qaddafi in power.

That none of us can peer through a magical window and witness the counterfactual world in which there is no attempt to topple Qaddafi, or in which there is no allied intervention in Libya, is to the decided advantage of those arguing the humanitarian necessity of our present course of action. Had we done nothing, we would have seen carnage and we would have been told that we could have prevented it. If we see carnage now and in the near future, we will be told that had we done nothing, it would have been even worse. Our cognitive clumsiness with counterfactual scenarios combined with our patriotic wish to see our state as a force for good leaves us ready to believe that yes, surely it would have been even worse had we not acted, or had we acted differently. And this buys interventionists a good deal of time to catch and capitalise on a break that creates the perception of success. The force of the "it would have been even worse" argument will dissipate only if Libya's civil war drags on and the public comes to see our intervention as having helped it drag on. But if the peace is restored before that day, and it probably will, most of us will judge our involvement a humanitarian success, even if, as a matter of perception-independent fact, it turns out not to have been. In that unhappy event, we'll be glad not to know that had we pursued a different policy, fewer people would have needlessly died.

Nevertheless, despite our natural biases, it remains both possible and necessary to intelligently estimate how much suffering and death we can expect intervention to avoid. When opponents of intervention ask us to consider, for example, how many lives could be saved were we to spend the cost of a military mission on anti-malarial bed nets, I understand them to be insisting that we take the stated humanitarian justification for this intervention seriously. If our foreign policy aims to prevent suffering and death with finite resources, it makes sense to ask whether *this* war makes sense on those grounds. I grasp the tiresome point that the choice on the table was not a choice between taking out Libya's air defences and buying bed nets. The choice was between taking out Libya's air defences *or not*. But the question nagging some of us is *why* this was the choice on the

table. Why did *this* come up as a matter requiring urgent attention and immediate decision? Why is it that the choice to express our humanitarian benevolence through the use of missiles and jets gets on the table—to the top of the agenda, even—again and again, but the choice to express it less truculently so rarely does? If our humanitarian values really set the agenda, how likely is it that the prospect of urgent military intervention would come up so often?

It's important that we take the logic of humanitarian justification seriously, but it's true that talk of bed nets tries to do this in a somewhat confused and confusing way. What we really need is intelligent insight into the death and suffering intervention in Libya can be expected to prevent relative to other feasible options. That no one seems even to *try* to do this in a serious or systematic way—that it seems almost surprising when [someone notes the existence of options](#) "between sitting on our hands and launching something close to all-out war"—suggests that objective humanitarian success isn't actually the guiding light of Operation Odyssey Dawn.

Portugal's government collapses

The death of Sócrates

Mar 23rd 2011, 21:53 by The Economist online



IN IRELAND a bail-out by the euro zone's rescue fund helped to force the government into calling (and losing) an early election. In Portugal an early election may force the government into accepting a bail-out. The question is: which government?

Tonight's defeat of the minority Socialist government, led by José Sócrates (pictured), in a parliamentary vote on austerity measures—the fourth such package in 12 months—triggered his prompt resignation as prime minister. But it also created a political vacuum in which nobody may have enough authority to negotiate a bail-out.

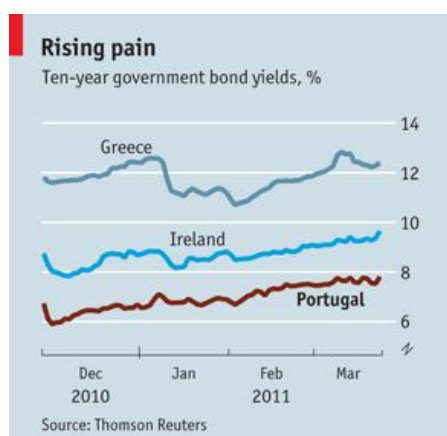
Few doubt that Portugal is close to the moment when it has no alternative but to seek assistance from the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), the euro-zone's bail-out fund. But economists say that the crisis increases the chances that Portugal will need EU funds soon. Commerzbank predicts it will “increase pressure on Portugal to accept EFSF aid over the coming days”.

The austerity measures, which included a special tax of as much as 10% on pensions above €1,500 (\$2,110) a month, were drafted with input from the European Central Bank and the European Commission as an “additional guarantee” that Lisbon would meet its fiscal targets. But Pedro Passos Coelho, leader of the centre-right Social Democrats (PSD), the main opposition party, refused to support them because they were aimed at “the most vulnerable”.

The PSD has a big lead in the opinion polls. And unlike Mr Sócrates, who has fiercely resisted a bail-out, Mr Passos Coelho is ready for one. That is because, as Antonio Garcia Pascual of Barclays Capital says, the PSD might not feel that it has much to lose from a bail-out if, as seems likely, the blame falls on Mr Sócrates's government instead.

It now falls to Aníbal Cavaco Silva, Portugal's conservative president, to sort out the immediate future. The general election he is likely to call cannot legally be held for a minimum of two months; it will probably not happen before mid-June. Mr Sócrates would normally expect to stay in office as a caretaker (he was due to

attend this week's EU summit in Brussels, for example). But his powers to negotiate are limited. So Mr Cavaco Silva might call on all political parties to form an interim coalition. Or he could appoint a transitional non-party "technical government".



Gilles Moec, head of European economic research at Deutsche Bank, says a "technical cabinet" would be better placed to negotiate a bail-out. But he argues that the Irish experience would probably deter other European countries from cutting a deal with a government that lacks the clear backing of its parliament. Portugal's bond yields are already higher than at any time since the country joined the euro (see chart).

Yet Emilie Gay, an economist with Capital Economics, notes that Portugal's budget deficit is lower than in most other troubled euro-zone economies. The country's most serious challenge, she says, is to avoid "another lost decade" of low growth. Since the start of the euro in 1999 Portugal has been on average the slowest growing economy in the club, despite being its poorest member when it joined.

Ms Gay concludes that Portugal is likely to become the third peripheral euro-zone country to need a bail-out. Yet to overcome the deep-seated structural problems which have held back the economy will take not just rescue money but ambitious reform as well. The country's need to issue debt is only €2 billion or so a month. Although that is small by most measures, and the government may have enough cash to meet redemptions in April, Portugal could struggle to last until June. Yet the markets are expecting action long before then. In mid-March Moody's, a rating agency, downgraded Portuguese debt.

Portugal's political turmoil and its urgent need for a rescue will create new problems at the EU summit, which is due to sign off on an effective expansion of the bail-out fund and a German-led "pact for the euro". If EU leaders agree to bail out Portugal, they may find they have already used quite a big chunk of their fund. Judging by experience, the markets will then move on to attack the Spanish. The bail-out fund can easily finance Portugal. But it is not clear that it could deal with Spain.

Now Feeling Free, but Still Without Work, Tunisians Look Toward Europe

By SCOTT SAYARE

ZARZIS, Tunisia — The revolution has changed much in this low-slung, whitewashed city on the Mediterranean coast. Residents no longer live in fear of the secret police, and speak openly of politics. Devout Muslims say they feel a new freedom to practice their faith. The red national flags that hang almost everywhere are no longer joined by the portrait of the ousted president, [Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali](#).

But scores of unemployed young men still slouch in the cafes in the afternoons, smoking water pipes, playing cards and sipping coffee. And at night, the fishing boats still ferry thousands of desperate workers across the Mediterranean to Europe.

“If I could swim to Lampedusa, I’d do it,” said Walid Bourwina, 23, referring to the Italian island to which thousands of Tunisians have recently fled. A small red satchel, stretched tight with all his belongings, leaned against his foot.

“I don’t want to spend a minute more here,” he said.

He had come to [Zarzis](#), long a major port of departure for Tunisians leaving for Europe, two weeks earlier from a village farther north. He was waiting — like dozens and dozens of other young men, their faces tired and drawn, wandering this city with their own small bags — to be approached by local people who quietly offer passage to Lampedusa for about \$1,450.

Tunisians young and old tell of their pride at felling a dictator and touching off the uprisings that have spread across the Arab world. But the exaltation of mid-January has begun to give way to more sober realities. The revolution has not solved chronic youth unemployment, and the unrest has battered the economy with the flight of tourists and capital. The government is in upheaval, and many also fear it will be years before a pre-revolution culture of mistrust and corruption fades.

“It’s an entire country that needs to be remade,” said [Ahmed Faouzi Khenissi](#), the mayor of Zarzis, a city of 70,000. “It’s not going to be one year, or two years, or three years. It’s going to be an entire generation.”

“If I were their age,” he said of the young men who flee to Europe, “I would have emigrated.”

With the border police suddenly absent after [the departure of Mr. Ben Ali](#) on Jan. 14, more than 15,000 Tunisians have left in boats for Europe, according to the [United Nations](#), most setting off from the beaches of Zarzis. In response, Italy’s various regions agreed Tuesday to temporarily share the responsibility of [taking in as many as 50,000 migrants](#) leaving North Africa.

“I don’t want to wait, unemployed, for another year, before things start getting better,” Mr. Bourwina said.

The eldest son of a [day laborer](#), he dropped out of high school because his family could no longer afford to pay for his schooling, he said. He had been out of work for the past year, though earlier he had been a painter in Tunis, the capital, earning 300 dinars each month. It was more than the minimum wage, but far from enough to pay for the home and car he covets, let alone the European lifestyle — discovered through Facebook, he said — to which he aspires, like many Tunisian youths.

For years, the unemployment rate here has hovered near 13 percent, according to official statistics. And in a nation where more than half the population is under 30, youth unemployment is at 30 percent, and even higher among university graduates.

[Tunisia](#)’s interim prime minister, Béji Caïd Essebsi, has said that reducing unemployment will very likely prove “arduous,” and would require an improbable economic growth rate of 8 or 9 percent.

“Tunisia is capable of this,” Mr. Essebsi vowed in an interview this month with *Le Monde*.

It would have been an ambitious goal even for pre-revolutionary Tunisia, where in the past decade annual growth only once exceeded 6 percent, in 2007. And it is a task made harder by the social and political unrest that has continued since mid-January. Planned elections remain several months away, and a number of interim ministers have resigned or been forced out of office. Several people have died in continuing street protests.

The tensions have sapped investor confidence, and agencies have downgraded Tunisia's credit rating to near junk status.

The country's economy weathered the global downturn with relative poise — growing 3 percent in 2009 — but it was dealt a harsh blow by the revolution. The upheaval crippled the critical tourism sector, which typically employs 400,000 of the country's 3.3 million workers and accounts for 7 percent of gross domestic product. Tourism revenues have dropped 40 percent in the months since Mr. Ben Ali's ouster. (The government has, however, started a promotional campaign with the cheeky tag line, "Finally free to tan.")

Mr. Essebsi, the prime minister, told *Le Monde* that he predicted that political stability would be achieved by midsummer; he offered no guess as to when the economy might recover, nor when unemployment might begin to fall.

"We don't know if things are going to be fixed," said one young man who left Zarzis just three weeks after the revolution. Now in Paris, he has yet to find work, but said he did not regret his departure.

"There's no hope in Tunisia," said the man, 27, who gave his name only as Walid, fearing deportation. He noted that many regional governments remained controlled by members of Mr. Ben Ali's now defunct political party.

He had found occasional work in Zarzis as a laborer, he said, living with his family and earning less than 100 dinars each month. Earlier, he had studied computing in Tunis, but said he left his degree unfinished after repeated beatings by the secret police. Vocally antigovernment, he said even his professors had begun to fail him, at the government's behest.

"They made me hate my country," he said, though he plans to return to Zarzis to build a house once he has earned 20,000 euros in France.

Tunisians have been leaving Zarzis with similar hopes for generations. Walid's own father worked in a [Renault](#) automobile plant in France for 23 years, he said. Local lore holds that there are 25,000 Zarzisian families living in France, many sending money home each month.

"Without that income, Zarzis could not survive," said Mr. Khenissi, the mayor. Emigration from the city "is not a new phenomenon," he said. "It will never stop."

The recent exodus is unprecedented in scale, though. It has devastated the local fishing fleet, the largest source of boats used to ferry migrants across the Mediterranean. Italian border authorities have seized 70 percent of the Zarzis fishing fleet in Lampedusa, Mr. Khenissi said. He estimated it would take a full year to rebuild it.

With so many young men suddenly gone — about 2,500 Zarzis residents are thought to have left since mid-January — businesses here have also reportedly been finding themselves short-handed.

"But on the other hand," Mr. Khenissi noted wryly, "we have less unemployment."

Shady Dealings Helped Qaddafi Build Fortune and Regime

By [ERIC LICHTBLAU](#), [DAVID ROHDE](#) and [JAMES RISEN](#)

WASHINGTON — In 2009, top aides to Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#) called together 15 executives from global energy companies operating in Libya's oil fields and issued an extraordinary demand: Shell out the money for his country's \$1.5 billion bill for its role in the downing of [Pan Am Flight 103](#) and other terrorist attacks.

If the companies did not comply, the Libyan officials warned, there would be “serious consequences” for their oil leases, according to a State Department summary of the meeting.

Many of those businesses balked, saying that covering Libya's legal settlement with victims' families for acts of terrorism was unthinkable. But some companies, including several based in the United States, appeared willing to give in to Libya's coercion and make what amounted to payoffs to keep doing business, according to industry executives, American officials and State Department documents.

The episode and others like it, the officials said, reflect a Libyan culture rife with corruption, kickbacks, strong-arm tactics and political patronage since the United States reopened trade with Colonel Qaddafi's government in 2004. As American and international oil companies, telecommunications firms and contractors moved into the Libyan market, they discovered that Colonel Qaddafi or his loyalists often sought to extract millions of dollars in “signing bonuses” and “consultancy contracts” — or insisted that the strongman's sons get a piece of the action through shotgun partnerships.

“Libya is a kleptocracy in which the regime — either the al-Qadhafi family itself or its close political allies — has a direct stake in anything worth buying, selling or owning,” a classified State Department cable said in 2009, using the department's spelling of Qaddafi.

The wealth that Colonel Qaddafi's family and his government accumulated with the help of international corporations in the years since the lifting of economic sanctions by the West helped fortify his hold on his country. While the outcome of the military intervention under way by the United States and allied countries is uncertain, Colonel Qaddafi's resources — [including a stash of tens of billions of dollars in cash that American officials believe he is using to pay soldiers, mercenaries and supporters](#) — may help him avert, or at least delay, his removal from power.

The government not only exploited corporations eager to do business, but willing governments as well. Libya's banks apparently collected lucrative fees by helping Iran launder huge sums of money in recent years in violation of international sanctions on Tehran, according to another cable from Tripoli included in a batch of classified documents obtained by [WikiLeaks](#). In 2009, the cable said, American diplomats warned Libyan officials that its dealings with Iran were jeopardizing Libya's enhanced world standing for the sake of “potential short-term business gains.”

In the first few years after trade restrictions were lifted — Colonel Qaddafi had given up his country's nuclear capabilities and pledged to renounce terrorism — many American companies were hesitant to do business with Libya's government, officials said. But with an agreement on a settlement over Libya's role in the Pan Am bombing over Lockerbie, Scotland, finally reached in 2008, officials at the [United States Commerce Department](#) began to serve as self-described matchmakers for American businesses.

At least a dozen American corporations, including Boeing, Raytheon, ConocoPhillips, Occidental, Caterpillar and Halliburton, gained footholds, or tried to do so. In May, the Obama administration and the Qaddafi government signed a new trade agreement, designed, according to Gene Cretz, the American ambassador to Libya, to “broaden and deepen our bilateral economic relations.”

Libya became so flush with cash that [Bernard L. Madoff](#), the New York financial manager who stole billions of dollars in a long-running [Ponzi scheme](#), approached officials overseeing the country's \$70 billion sovereign fund a few years ago about an “investment opportunity,” according to a State Department summary of the episode in 2010. “We did not accept,” a Libyan official reported.

Colonel Qaddafi, the State Department said, was personally involved in many business decisions. He worked with local “riqaba” councils, an oversight committee set up by the Libyan government to dole out business with foreign firms, and insisted on signing off on all contracts worth more than \$200 million. He also learned how to hide money and investments in case sanctions were ever imposed again, as they recently have been.

Colonel Qaddafi and his family set up accounts in banks around the world that are in the names of members of Libyan tribes that remain loyal to his government, said Idris Abdulla Abed al-Sonosi, a member of the exiled Libyan royal family, who is familiar with many of Colonel Qaddafi’s business dealings. (Some accounts may have been frozen by authorities, who have blocked access to tens of billions of dollars.) And Qaddafi relatives adopted lavish lifestyles — including posh homes, [Hollywood film investments](#) and private parties with American pop stars.

When Colonel Qaddafi was not making the decisions, one of his sons — whom he has anointed to run various sectors of the country’s economy — often was.

Daniel E. Karson, executive managing partner at Kroll, a risk-consulting firm, recalled in an interview that an international communications company he represented tried to enter the Libyan cellular phone market in 2007. From the outset, Libyan officials made it clear that the foreign company’s local business partner would have to be Muhammad Qaddafi, the eldest son of the Libyan ruler.

“We advised them they would have to go through Muhammad Qaddafi,” said Mr. Karson, who declined to identify the client. “This was not going to be done on the basis of, as they say in retail, price, quality and delivery.” Fearful of going into business with the Qaddafis, he said, the company made no investments in Libya.

Coca-Cola got caught in the middle of a fierce dispute between Muhammad Qaddafi and his brother Mutassim over control of a bottling plant the soda maker had opened in 2005, forcing it to shut down the plant for months amid armed confrontations, a diplomatic cable noted.

And Caterpillar, the Illinois machine maker, was about to finalize a lucrative deal in 2009 to provide equipment for infrastructure projects when Libya demanded the company become a partner with a state-owned company controlled by the Qaddafis, according to the State Department documents. Caterpillar resisted and was blocked by Libya from the work after intervention by American diplomats failed to break the impasse.

When Qaddafi aides demanded payment for the Lockerbie settlement from oil companies operating in Libya, a State Department cable in February 2009 reported, industry executives had indicated “that smaller operators and service companies might relent and pay.” Several industry officials and someone close to the settlement, all speaking only on condition of anonymity, said the payments went through but declined to identify the businesses.

Other companies also struck costly deals with the government. In 2008, Occidental Petroleum, based in California, paid a \$1 billion “signing bonus” to the Libyan government as part of 30-year agreement. A company spokesman said it was not uncommon for firms to pay large bonuses for long-term contracts.

The year before, Petro-Canada, a large Canadian oil company, made a similar \$1 billion payment after Libyan officials granted it a 30-year oil exploration license, according to diplomatic cables and company officials.

The company also hired Jack Richards, a business consultant based in the British Virgin Islands and close friend of the Qaddafis, as their local agent to cement the deal, according to *The Globe and Mail*, a Canadian newspaper. Mr. Richards, who could not be reached for comment, reportedly used shooting trips to British royal estates to win the family’s support.

The company also courted a Qaddafi son, [Seif al-Islam](#). Petro-Canada sponsored an exhibit of his paintings — ridiculed by Canadian critics as “lurid” and a “[triumph of banality](#)” — after museums refused. A Montreal business, SNC-Lavalin, which won more than \$1 billion in Libyan contracts, also sponsored the exhibit and a soccer team that hired another Qaddafi son, Saadi, as a player.

In Norway, two top officials at the state-run oil company quit in 2007 and came under government investigation after it was revealed the company had made more than \$7 million in apparently illegal “consultancy agreements” with Libya.

Looking back on the decision in 2004 to resume business dealings, Juan Zarate, a former top White House and [Treasury](#) official in the administration of President [George W. Bush](#), said that officials had believed then that the benefits of trying to rehabilitate Colonel Qaddafi outweighed the obvious risks. “It was a deal with the devil,” Mr. Zarate said.

“The hope was that with normalization, Qaddafi would serve less as the mad dog of the Middle East and more as a partner,” he added. “But I don’t think this is the way anyone would have wanted it to work out.”

Barclay Walsh contributed research.

Germany Steps Away From European Unity

By STEVEN ERLANGER and [JUDY DEMPSEY](#)

PARIS — Driven by electoral pressures and [Germany's](#) postwar aversion to war and nuclear power, Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#) has deeply strained relations with allies in the [European Union](#) and the [NATO](#) alliance, raising new questions about Germany's ability to play a global role in foreign policy, even as its economic power and influence grow.

By abstaining in the Security Council on the resolution authorizing military action to protect Libyan civilians — and by refusing on Wednesday to participate in the enforcement of an arms embargo on [Libya](#) that the [United Nations](#) authorized — Germany pointedly refused to go along with the political aims and leadership of its two most important European allies, Britain and France, as well as the United States. The decision made the idea of a united European foreign policy seem further away than ever, even if France had broken solidarity first by suddenly recognizing the Libyan opposition as the legitimate government of the country.

And by choosing to shut down seven older nuclear plants in Germany after the nuclear crisis in Japan, Mrs. Merkel reversed her own policy and further ruffled relations with France, which derives 75 percent of its electric power from nuclear plants.

The new strains come weeks after Germany issued demands for economic austerity in the countries that use the euro as the price for new loan guarantees to troubled countries like Greece and Ireland. Portugal is thought by many to be next in line for a bailout. Germany, the richest and largest member of the European Union, has been tough and not always diplomatic in refusing to come to the aid of more profligate countries unless they undergo painful budget cuts and economic restructuring.

Taken together, the actions in Berlin demonstrate anew Germany's increasing willingness in a post-cold-war world to act like other countries, subordinating relations with allies for the sake of national interests — and even for domestic political reasons.

Mrs. Merkel's decision to abstain from the Security Council vote was fiercely criticized by many in her own party, while [Joschka Fischer](#), a member of the opposition Greens and a former foreign minister, wrote that "Germany has lost its credibility in the United Nations and the Middle East" and that "German hopes for a permanent seat on the Security Council have been permanently dashed."

Klaus Naumann, the former head of the German military, said that "even the idea of a European Union seat" on the Security Council had been damaged, adding, "Germany has turned the idea of a unified European Union foreign policy into a farce."

In a meeting of Mrs. Merkel's own parliamentary caucus, Ruprecht Polenz, the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, called Germany's abstention "a catastrophic signal," according to Der Spiegel. Christian Ruck of the Christian Social Union, the Bavarian sister party, complained that "the European Union is falling apart."

It is not easy to draw a clear line through all these events, said Stefan Kornelius, foreign editor of the daily Süddeutsche Zeitung. Germany is still "the savior of the euro," he said, "and it's unthinkable that one day Germany should be the savior of Europe and the backbone of the economic union and the next the funeral director of alliance politics."

The Libyan vote was "highly disturbing," coming out of pacifism, exceptionalism, immaturity and fear of domestic backlash, he said. "And it came at an unfortunate time for Merkel, when the country was driven by angst due to the nuclear accident in Japan. So this combination of nuclear angst and deeply rooted pacifism just ahead of very important state elections — this was the perfect storm."

The German government, caught up in the political fallout from the Japanese nuclear calamity, decided to abstain at the United Nations because that was a "more honest" expression of Germany's aversion to military action of its own in Libya, said a government official who spoke on condition of anonymity, following diplomatic protocol.

The official stressed, however, that the government's attention had been focused primarily on Japan. When history is written, he said, "people will remember 9/11, the fall of the [Berlin Wall](#), the Kennedy assassinations and Fukushima."

François Heisbourg, special adviser for the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris, said it was uncomfortable for Germany to find itself in the company of Russia, China, India and Brazil while its main European allies and the United States voted for the resolution.

Given that President [Nicolas Sarkozy](#) of France had infuriated Mrs. Merkel and other European allies by his unilateral and seemingly impulsive recognition of the Libyan opposition, Mr. Heisbourg said, it seems unfair to simply blame Berlin for the breach in European unity. “But in public opinion, it looks like Germany refused European and Western solidarity,” he said.

Mrs. Merkel is acting with serious political constraints, with her coalition partner, the Free Democrats, dropping in the polls and their leader, [Guido Westerwelle](#), the foreign minister who came out so strongly against the Libyan operation, considered to be in danger of losing his party leadership. State elections are chipping away at her control of the upper house of Parliament.

If her Christian Democratic Union loses its traditional stronghold of Baden-Württemberg in elections on Sunday, as polls indicate it will, she will face an opposition majority in parliament, badly weakening her political authority and freedom of action.

“The nuclear decision was Merkel trying to stem a political tsunami,” said Constanze Stelzenmüller, a senior fellow at the German Marshall Fund in Berlin. “This was crisis prevention.”

Ms. Stelzenmüller suggested that Germany’s growing isolationism was part of a larger movement away from the certainties of cold-war alliances and institutions. With the end of the cold war, these more national priorities were inevitable, but are uncomfortable. “We Germans are doing what others are doing, but we are whipsawing more.”

Germany explained its decision to withdraw its naval forces from the Mediterranean by saying the arms embargo on Libya needed a parliamentary mandate, since it could involve military force.

At the same time, to placate German allies, the government approved sending 300 more soldiers to Afghanistan to operate NATO surveillance planes, to ease the strain on countries that are involved in Libya and may need to redeploy forces.

Opposition lawmakers were unimpressed, however. “It’s a perverse logic,” said Wolfgang Gehrcke, foreign affairs spokesman of the Left party, “to exacerbate the war in Afghanistan because one doesn’t want to get involved in a war in Libya.”

Steven Erlanger reported from Paris, and Judy Dempsey from Berlin.

Hugs From Libyans

By [NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF](#)

CAIRO

This may be a first for the Arab world: An American airman who bailed out over Libya was [rescued from his hiding place in a sheep pen](#) by villagers who hugged him, served him juice and thanked him effusively for bombing their country.

Even though some villagers were hit by American shrapnel, one gamely told an Associated Press reporter that he bore no grudges. Then, on Wednesday in Benghazi, the major city in eastern Libya whose streets would almost certainly be running with blood now if it weren't for the American-led military intervention, residents held a "thank you rally." They wanted to express gratitude to coalition forces for helping save their lives.

Doubts are reverberating across America about the military intervention in Libya. Those questions are legitimate, and the uncertainties are huge. But let's not forget that a humanitarian catastrophe has been averted for now and that this intervention looks much less like the 2003 invasion of Iraq than the successful 1991 gulf war to rescue Kuwait from Iraqi military occupation.

This is also one of the few times in history when outside forces have intervened militarily to save the lives of citizens from their government. More commonly, we wring our hands for years as victims are massacred, and then, when it is too late, earnestly declare: "Never again."

In 2005, the United Nations approved a new doctrine called the "responsibility to protect," nicknamed R2P, declaring that world powers have the right and obligation to intervene when a dictator devours his people. The Libyan intervention is putting teeth into that fledgling concept, and here's one definition of progress: The world took three-and-a-half years to respond forcefully to the slaughter in Bosnia, and about three-and-a-half weeks to respond in Libya.

Granted, intervention will be inconsistent. We're more likely to intervene where there are also oil or security interests at stake. But just as it's worthwhile to feed some starving children even if we can't reach them all, it's worth preventing some massacres or genocides even if we can't intervene every time.

I opposed the 2003 Iraq invasion because my reporting convinced me that most Iraqis hated Saddam Hussein but didn't want American forces intruding on their soil. This time my reporting persuades me that most Libyans welcome outside intervention.

"Opinion was unanimous," Michel Gabaudan, the president of [Refugees International](#), told me on Wednesday after a visit to Libya. Mr. Gabaudan said that every Libyan he spoke to agreed that the military strikes had averted "a major humanitarian disaster."

"Men, women and children, they are ecstatic about the role of the coalition but worried that it may not continue," he said.

Some Congressional critics complain that President Obama [should have consulted Congress](#) more thoroughly. Fair enough. But remember that the intervention was almost too late because forces loyal to Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi were already in Benghazi. Indeed, there was a firefight on Sunday [right outside the hotel in Benghazi](#) where foreign journalists are staying. A couple of days of dutiful consultation would have resulted in a bloodbath and, perhaps, the collapse of the rebel government.

Just before the airstrikes, Libyans were crossing the border into Egypt at seven times the normal rate. Once the strikes began, the exodus ended and the flow reversed. For all the concern about civilian casualties, Libyans are voting with their feet — going toward the airstrikes because they feel safer thanks to them.

Critics of the intervention make valid arguments. It's true that there are enormous uncertainties: Can the rebels now topple Colonel Qaddafi? What's the exit strategy? How much will this cost?

But weighed against those uncertainties are a few certainties: If not for this intervention, Libyan civilians would be dying on a huge scale; Colonel Qaddafi's family would be locked in place for years; and the message would have gone out to all dictators that ruthlessness works.

The momentum has reversed. More airstrikes on Colonel Qaddafi's artillery and armor will help. So would jamming his radio and television broadcasts. Arab countries are already delivering weapons and ammunition to the rebels, boosting their capabilities and morale. In short, there are risks ahead but also opportunities.

A senior White House official says that the humanitarian argument was decisive for President Obama: "The president was chilled by what would happen to the people of Benghazi and Tobruk. There were critical national security and national interest reasons to do this, but what compelled the president to act so quickly was the immediate prospect of mass atrocities against the people of Benghazi and the east. He was well aware of the risks of military action, but he also feared the costs of inaction."

I've seen war up close, and I detest it. But there are things I've seen that are even worse — such as the systematic slaughter of civilians as the world turns a blind eye. Thank God that isn't happening this time.

I invite you to visit my blog, [On the Ground](#). Please also join me on [Facebook](#), watch my [YouTube videos](#) and follow me on [Twitter](#).

The Goal in Libya Is Not Regime Change

By INTERVIEW WITH AMR MOUSSA | GLOBAL VIEWPOINT / TRIBUNE MEDIA SERVICES.

Amr Moussa, the departing secretary general of the Arab League who has declared his candidacy for the presidency of Egypt, was interviewed on Monday in Cairo by Raghida Dergham, columnist and senior diplomatic correspondent for the London-based Al Hayat. Following are excerpts from that interview:

Raghida Dergham: Is this an open-ended military operation in Libya, whatever it takes?

Amr Moussa: Of course not, of course not. There is a resolution, 1973, of the Security Council that determines the mission and the goal. The goal is to protect the civilian lives, and once the goal is achieved, especially through a cease-fire and observers to the cease-fire are put in place, the mission will come to an end. The mission has the task of protecting the civilian population in Libya and against attack threats and against use of weapons, very severe weapons.

Dergham: When you criticized the application of the no-fly zone, some people wondered if you really meant it. Others went as far as using the word “hypocrisy.”

Moussa: I meant what I said: The goal should be to protect Libyan civilians. Why did I say so? There were reports that civilian casualties started to appear as a result of the attacks by the coalition. As a result, I said that all civilian casualties and attacks that would affect the civilians are our concern — and that is why we needed to establish a no-fly zone and safe areas in the first place. We are committed to the Security Council goals, letter and spirit according to what the resolution determines.

Dergham: When you went to Paris and endorsed the no-fly zone, you knew that there would be a military operation, and the Security Council resolution spoke as well of a “no-drive zone.” You did know that this would require bombings on the ground?

Moussa: I stressed at the time the necessity to protect the civilian population and that there are limitations by the Security Council: no land invasions, forces of occupation, etc. That there would be some military operations in order to paralyze the launching pads, this we understood. Even some Arab countries have decided to participate in this.

Dergham : Then you have no second thoughts about endorsing the no-fly zone, whatever it takes?

Moussa: No, there are no second thoughts on this. This is our initiative. The no-fly zone is to protect the Libyan citizens. Respecting the resolution is also a commitment by us.

Dergham : In the end, isn't this an operation to embolden and support and enable the rebels to keep Benghazi?

Moussa: You can say it in a different way: To keep the forces of the regime from attacking Benghazi and inflicting a lot of casualties. This operation is to prevent this from happening, not vice versa. It is not to give the rebels support. It is not a question of supporting a regime, a government or a council. It is to save the situation from further, bloody deterioration.

Dergham: If Muammar Qaddafi maintains his grip on parts of Libya, what would be the exit strategy?

Moussa: Well, I cannot really answer this question, but it would be a prolonged case of civil war and tension and destruction of Libya. This is too much. I hope that there will be no civil war, and I hope that things will be dealt with, with reason.

Dergham: People are speaking of one way out of a prolonged war in Libya: A bullet or bomb somehow lands on the head of Muammar Qaddafi.

Moussa: Some things I cannot discuss and I don't want to discuss.

Dergham: The Security Council resolution says nothing about getting rid of leadership?

Moussa: This is not dealt with by the Security Council. As I told you, we don't go beyond the Security Council and what the Arab League decided. The goal is a no-fly zone. We are not talking about anything else.

Dergham: How afraid are you of the disintegration of Yemen given that there is a history of north-south conflict, of the Houthi and Al-Qaeda?

Moussa: I hope this won't happen. That's why the situation in Yemen has to come to a quick solution and perhaps consensus solution in order to prevent further deterioration that would perhaps lead to that. In Yemen there is an opposition, there are demonstrations and there are clear requests from the people. They all have their own grievances. Therefore, we need to know what happened to those demands and how the government is dealing with them.

Dergham: And Bahrain?

Moussa: Bahrain is a different situation but also cause for concern.

Dergham: It seems different yardsticks are being applied in the Arab world?

Moussa: Why different yardsticks? Why? We have done the right thing when we resorted to the Security Council in Libya. There will be no different yardsticks. We saw the situation in Libya, and we are going to consider the situation in other Arab countries and then decide what to do.

Dergham: You haven't said much about Syria. Why so quiet so far?

Moussa: Because the situation there is still unclear.

Dergham : Do you want to wait until a lot of people die before it is clear?

Moussa: No, certainly not. We do not have the full picture as to what is going on. Is it in Deraa alone, or is there violence and crackdown in other places?

Dergham: You have seen the people asking for change, and you supported them strongly in Egypt, but you are hesitant to support them in Syria? There are demonstrations, and people are dead and people are wounded in Syria. What is your message as secretary general of the Arab League on that issue?

Moussa: I am certainly on the side of the free expression of the people, and I am certainly on the side of revolutions and the new uprising in the Arab world. No question about that.

Dergham: You are running for president of Egypt. Are you afraid that there is not enough time for preparation for parliamentary elections by others than the Muslim Brotherhood, who are better organized?

Moussa: We need all political forces to be ready at the same time to get a parliament that is representative of all parties of our society. Now, only one or two groups are ready, but the rest are not. The new parties have not been formed and the old parties are not ready. So quick elections will not do. Be that as it may, now we have to make the best out of this election and respect the result of the referendums.

Dergham: If you are president, will you amend or touch the treaty with Israel, or will you respect it fully?

Moussa: It is there to stay.

Dergham: How would you change toward Israel and Palestinians and Gaza?

Moussa: We are committed to the rights of Palestinians to have their own state. We are committed to that. We are committed to two states. But we are certainly against building settlements or against changing the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and we disagree with many aspects of the Israeli policies towards the Palestinians.

Dergham: Some are criticizing President Obama as being too slow in embracing the Arab revolutions. Do you agree?

Moussa: Arab revolution has happened because we revolted. We welcome any support today or tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. So why should we blame him? It is our revolution.

Dergham: You have no worries about the future of this revolution?

Moussa: We have to be concerned. The road is long and arduous and there will be a lot of problems. We have a very difficult economic situation. There are still question marks on what kind of political structure we are going to build.

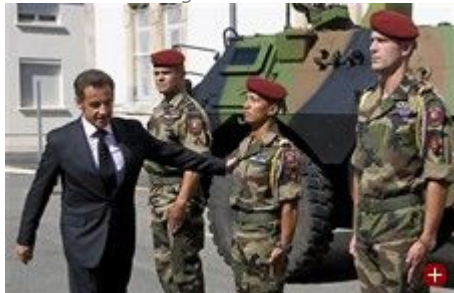
Dergham: What worries you most as a candidate for president of Egypt? As someone leaving the Arab League after a decade, what legacy do you hope for?

Moussa: In this drive toward freedom, these revolutions towards democracy, there are no U-turns. Whatever the result, I am really happy that our people — the people of the Arab world, Egypt and Tunisia and the rest — are revolting. They want a better future. I want to help in achieving this.

Sarkozy in Höchstform

Als Armeechef und Kriegsherr schafft Frankreichs Präsident Nicolas Sarkozy, was ihm als Staatsoberhaupt bislang nur selten gelang: als einigender Landesvater aufzutreten. Auf die deutsche Haltung in der Libyen-Krise aber war er nicht vorbereitet.

Von Michaela Wiegel



Der bonapartistische Reflex: Sarkozy kann sich auf die Geschlossenheit seiner Landsleute verlassen

23. März 2011

Kaiser Napoleon wird die Aussage zugeschrieben, „impossible n'est pas français“ – für einen Franzosen ist nichts unmöglich. Nicolas Sarkozy hat das Unmögliche gewagt. Er hat sich angesichts einer verfahrenen innen- und außenpolitischen Lage nicht damit begnügt, auf bessere Zeiten zu warten. Über Nacht ist aus dem „Diplomaten der Versöhnung“, der den libyschen Despoten Gaddafi hofierte und den tunesischen Herrscher Ben Ali bis zuletzt stützte, ein schneidiger Kämpfer für Freiheitsrechte geworden. Plötzlich steht vor den Franzosen wieder ein Weltenlenker, der nicht ohnmächtig auf das angekündigte Blutbad von Benghasi wartete und der einer Diktatur militärisch die Grenzen weist.

Alle Parteien unter Ausschluss des rechtsextremen Front National zollten Sarkozy Respekt für sein entschiedenes Eintreten zum Schutz der libyschen Zivilbevölkerung. Erbitterte Gegenspieler von der bürgerlichen Rechten wie Dominique de Villepin oder François Bayrou schlossen die Reihen. Der sozialistische Fraktionsvorsitzende Jean-Marc Ayrault gratulierte Sarkozy in der Nationalversammlung zu seinem diplomatischen Erfolg. Der sozialistische Fraktionschef war zuvor einer der beharrlichsten Kritiker der Nordafrikapolitik Sarkozys gewesen und hatte mit seinen Vorhaltungen maßgeblich zum Rücktritt von Außenministerin Michèle Alliot-Marie beigetragen.

Der Waffengang muss dem französischen Gerechtigkeitsempfinden entsprechen

Anders als in Deutschland muss der französische Präsident das Parlament in Fragen von Krieg und Frieden nicht überzeugen. Laut Artikel 35 soll er die Abgeordneten binnen drei Tagen lediglich unterrichten, wenn er Soldaten in fremde Territorien ausrücken lässt. Sarkozy hat mit einer Verfassungsänderung immerhin bewirkt, dass die Volksvertretung künftig bei der Verlängerung von Auslandseinsätzen mitzureden hat, sobald diese vier Monate überschreiten.

Sarkozy vertraut auf den bonapartistischen Reflex seiner Landsleute, die für ihre Armee zu größter Geschlossenheit fähig sind. Das setzt voraus, dass der Waffengang ihrem Gerechtigkeitsempfinden entspricht. Bislang hat sich der Präsident nicht verschätzt, als er an das Selbstverständnis der Franzosen appellierte, die ihr Land gern als großzügige Mittelmacht sehen, die den Bedrängten zu Hilfe eilt. Als Armeechef und Kriegsherr schafft Sarkozy, was ihm als Staatsoberhaupt bislang nur selten gelang: als einigender Landesvater aufzutreten.

Auf das deutsche Ausscheren war Sarkozy nicht vorbereitet

Die nationale Entente schließt Zweifel am militärischen Erfolg in Libyen nicht aus. Außenminister Juppé sprach in der Nationalversammlung die Risiken offen aus. Doch überwog parteiübergreifend die Einschätzung, dass Frankreich durch Passivität mehr zu verlieren hätte als durch den Versuch, die Aufständischen gegen den libyschen Diktator mit Waffengewalt zu retten. Die Intervention gilt unmissverständlich als Warnung an die autokratischen Regime in Nordafrika, deren Neigung zu Repression die frühere Schutz- und Kolonialmacht gut kennt. Der Reformwille eines Mohammed VI. von Marokko soll gestärkt werden.

Der französische Präsident hat frühzeitig den Schulterschluss mit Großbritannien gesucht. Das enge militärische Zusammenrücken, die Freude an der Wiedergewinnung der seit der Suez-Krise verspielten franko-britischen Führungsrolle dürfen nicht darüber hinwegtäuschen, dass Sarkozy auf das deutsche Ausscheren nicht vorbereitet war. Der Präsident rechnete nicht mit einem deutschen Militäraufgebot. Aber er hatte die verbale Unterstützung aus Berlin für die Freiheitsbewegung in Tunesien, Ägypten und Libyen so gedeutet, dass die Bundesregierung in der Stunde der Entscheidung im UN-Sicherheitsrat ihre Zustimmung nicht verweigern würde.

Kein ständiger Sitz im Sicherheitsrat für „dieses Deutschland“

Dass Deutschland sich in New York als weniger verlässlicher Partner als Portugal erwiesen hatte, hat die französische Diplomatie nachhaltig verstimmt. Schon wird die Frage gestellt, ob „dieses Deutschland“ einen Platz als ständiges Mitglied im Sicherheitsrat haben sollte. Nicolas

Sarkozy ließ sich mit der Äußerung zitieren, dass es keine europäische Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik geben könne, solange Deutschland „so“ reagiere. Die Verbitterung darüber wächst, dass der deutsche Außenminister weiterhin öffentlich am Militäreinsatz zweifelt, als stehe die Entscheidung darüber noch aus. Hohe Diplomaten verweisen darauf, dass der frühere Staatspräsident Chirac verstand zu schweigen, als im Irak-Konflikt die Waffen sprachen.

Präsident Sarkozy behagt es hingegen, dass die Libyen-Intervention die europäisch-amerikanische Aufgabenverteilung neu bestimmen könnte. Er hat gegen starke Beharrungskräfte die Rückkehr Frankreichs in die integrierten Militärstrukturen der Nato durchgesetzt. Jetzt will er vorführen, dass das vom gaullistischen Unabhängigkeitsstreben geprägte Frankreich nicht an Selbstbehauptungsdrang eingebüßt hat. Deshalb will er die notwendige Beteiligung der Nato in der Öffentlichkeit herunterspielen und die politische Führung Frankreichs und Großbritanniens betonen. Er profitiert geschickt von dem Wunsch Präsident Obamas nach einer Lastenteilung, die Amerika bei der Libyenintervention nicht als „führende Kriegspartei“ in der islamischen Welt exponiert. Sarkozy läuft zur Höchstform auf, wenn er beherzt und blitzschnell entscheiden muss. Ein Zermürbungskrieg gegen Gaddafi ist ihm und Europa nicht zu wünschen.

Text: F.A.Z.

Merkel sieht Deutschland als Profiteur des Euro

Deutschland soll in den neuen EU-Krisenfonds 22 Milliarden Euro in bar einzahlen. Die Haftung sei nach oben begrenzt, sagt Kanzlerin Merkel im Bundestag. Sie erklärt 2011 zu einem „Jahr des Vertrauens“ für den Euro. Steinbrück warnt vor einem EU-Zerfall.

24. März 2011

Vor dem entscheidenden Gipfel der Europäischen Union (EU) am Donnerstag und Freitag in Brüssel hat Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel (CDU) die Kritiker in den eigenen Reihen und die Opposition aufgerufen, sich für das europäische Rettungsprogramm für stark verschuldete Staaten in der EU einzusetzen. „Deutschland profitiert vom Euro wie kaum ein anderes Land in der Europäischen Union“, sagte sie am Donnerstag in einer Regierungserklärung im Bundestag. „Der Euro sorgt für Arbeitsplätze, er sorgt für Wirtschaftswachstum, er sorgt für Steuereinnahmen in Deutschland.“

Die Gemeinschaftswährung sei stabil, weil es eine unabhängige Europäische Zentralbank gebe, sagte Merkel. Ohne den Euro, der für Wachstum und stabile Preise Sorge, wäre ihrer Meinung nach die Finanzkrise viel schlimmer geworden. Sie appellierte an alle Mitglieder des Bundestages, die Vorgaben des Gesamtpakets zur Euro-Stabilisierung einzuhalten. In den Fraktionen von Union und FDP gibt es deutliche Kritik an den zusätzlichen Belastungen für den Bundeshaushalt.



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„Niemand in Europa wird allein gelassen. Niemand in Europa wird fallen gelassen. Europa gelingt nur gemeinsam“, sagte Merkel

Deutschland soll in den neuen Rettungsfonds ESM über mehrere Jahre rund 22 Milliarden Euro bar einzahlen. Nach bisheriger Planung soll 2013 die erste Hälfte überwiesen werden. Dann wird der permanente Rettungsschirm (ESM) den befristeten Schirm (EFSF) ersetzen. Mit dem umfangreichen Paket reagiert die EU auf die Schuldenkrisen in Griechenland und Irland. Inzwischen mehren sich die Anzeichen, dass Portugal wohl als nächstes Land unter den Rettungsschirm muss. Die Risiken für die Steuerzahler beim neuen Euro-Gesamtpaket seien nach Angaben von Merkel gedeckelt. „Die Haftung für Deutschland ist nach oben begrenzt“, sagte Merkel in der Regierungserklärung. Sie werde darauf dringen, dass der Ausbau des Kapitalstocks von 2013 an auf fünf Jahre verteilt werde (siehe [Bundesregierung will Bareinlage später leisten](#)).

Die europäischen Staats- und Regierungschefs kommen am Nachmittag in Brüssel zusammen, um über ein großes Paket zur Euro-Absicherung zu entscheiden. Bei dem zweitägigen Spitzentreffen soll auch über die Libyen-Krise sowie die Folgen der Atomkatastrophe von Japan gesprochen werden.

Die vielfach geforderten Euro-Bonds - gemeinsame europäische Anleihen - lehnte Merkel abermals ab. Es werde mit ihrer schwarz-gelben Koalition keine Vergemeinschaftung von Schulden in Europa geben. Wer solche Forderungen erhebe, handele nicht im Interesse der deutschen Steuerzahler. „Es wird also weder regelmäßige noch dauerhafte Transferleistungen geben“, sagte sie.

„Hochachtung“ für Portugals Ministerpräsidenten

Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel (CDU) hat sich enttäuscht über die Ablehnung des von der portugiesischen Regierung vorgelegten Sparpakets durch das Parlament in Lissabon geäußert. Es sei „bedauerlich“, dass Ministerpräsident José Socrates keine parlamentarische Mehrheit bekommen habe, sagte Merkel in der Regierungserklärung. Das „umfassende Reformpaket“ der portugiesischen Regierung für die Jahre 2011, 2012 und 2013 habe beim Eurogruppentreffen Mitte März die Zustimmung der EU-Kommission und der Europäischen Zentralbank gefunden, sagte Merkel. Bei dem Treffen sei Socrates die „Hochachtung“ für seine Pläne ausgedrückt worden.

Das Parlament in Lissabon hatte dem Sparpaket am Mittwochabend eine Absage erteilt. Daraufhin reichte Socrates, der eine Minderheitsregierung anführt, seinen Rücktritt ein (siehe [Portugal: Ministerpräsident Sócrates tritt zurück](#)). Die Opposition habe seinem Kabinett „alle Möglichkeiten zum Regieren“ entzogen, sagte Socrates.

Das „Programm für Stabilität und Wachstum“ der portugiesischen Regierung sollte das Staatsdefizit reduzieren und einen Antrag auf EU-Hilfen abenden. Es ist schon das vierte Maßnahmenpaket dieser Art innerhalb eines Jahres. Finanzminister Fernando Teixeira dos Santos hatte am Montag erstmals seit Beginn der Finanzkrise öffentlich Hilfen aus dem Euro-Rettungsschirm für sein hochverschuldetes Land in Erwägung gezogen.

Merkel sieht drei Ziele

„Niemand in Europa wird allein gelassen. Niemand in Europa wird fallen gelassen. Europa gelingt nur gemeinsam“, sagte Merkel. Mit der neuen Gesamtstrategie werde das Jahr 2011 für den Euro und die Europäische Union „zum Jahr des Vertrauens“. Sie nannte drei Ziele, die mit dem neuen Pakt verbunden seien:

Erstens gehe es darum, mehr Stabilität und Solidität herzustellen. Dafür würden strengere Vorgaben eingeführt, deren Einhaltung scharf überwacht werde.

Zweitens nannte Merkel die Stärkung der Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. Alle Euro-Staaten müssten mehr tun, um wettbewerbsfähiger zu werden, das schließe auch Deutschland mit ein, sagte sie und sicherte dem Parlament gleichzeitig eine ausführliche Mitwirkung zu. Der Pakt setze auf die direkte Verantwortung der Staats- und Regierungschefs, sagte sie. Es verstehe sich von selbst, dass dies in Deutschland der Unterstützung des Bundestages bedürfe.

Drittens müsse es um ein „ausgewogenes Verhältnis von Eigenverantwortung und Solidarität“ gehen, sagte Merkel. Sie verwies dazu auf die neuen Vertragsbestimmungen, nach denen Hilfe beispielsweise nur gezahlt wird, wenn dies unabdingbar ist, um die Stabilität des Euro zu wahren (Ultima Ratio). Wichtig sei auch ein einstimmiger Beschluss in der EU. Betroffene Euro-Mitgliederstaaten müssten sich zudem zu harten Einschnitten verpflichten. „Solidarität gibt es nur bei entsprechender Eigenanstrengung des jeweiligen Landes.“

Steinbrück warnt vor Zerfall der EU

Der frühere Bundesfinanzminister Peer Steinbrück (SPD) hat die Bemühungen der schwarz-gelben Bundesregierung zur Euro-Rettung grundsätzlich unterstützt. Das Paket zur Rettung der Gemeinschaftswährung sei notwendig, es sei aber in mancher Hinsicht nicht ausreichend. Das sagte Steinbrück am Donnerstag in der Aussprache zur Regierungserklärung. Die Bundesregierung habe aber zu spät reagiert. „Es hat sehr lange gedauert, bis in Teilen ihrer Regierung, in ihrer Koalition die Einsicht nachvollzogen wurde, dass aus einem Stolpern von Fall zu Fall ein umfassender Ansatz gefunden werden muss.“

Die EU und ganz Europa befinde sich an einem Scheideweg. Es gehe auch um die Frage, ob Deutschland in und mit Europa am Ende des Weges noch eine führende Wohlstandsregion in der Welt sein werde, sagte Steinbrück. Ob Europa seine Zivilisation behaupten und sogar zum Vorbild aufstrebender Länder machen könne, entscheide sich maßgebend an der Bewältigung der Euro-Krise. Steinbrück warnte vor einem Zerfall der Europäischen Union mit der Folge von Renationalisierungen in Europa. Bei der Euro-Rettung dürften kleinliche nationale Egoismen keine Rolle spielen.

Text: FAZ.NET

The Libya campaign / Into the unknown

The Economist Mar 23rd 2011, 16:55 by M.J.S.



EVEN as French warplanes set off on March 19th, under United Nations mandate, to stop Colonel Qaddafi's tanks and artillery reaching the Libyan rebel stronghold of Benghazi, it was clear that the hastily-assembled "coalition of the willing" had little choice but to make it up as it went along. The pace of events on the ground had left little time for sober reflection.

Security Council Resolution 1973, passed less than 48 hours earlier with Russia, China, Brazil, India and Germany abstaining, was a triumph for French and British diplomacy. France's president, Nicholas Sarkozy, had worked energetically to persuade Arab countries to make an appeal through the usually fairly useless Arab League for the UN to come to the aid of Libyan civilians. David Cameron, Britain's prime minister, had done his part by cajoling the Americans into overcoming their reservations about military intervention. Remarkably the resolution, which was co-sponsored by Lebanon, gave the allies an almost free hand, short of a full-scale invasion and occupation, to do whatever was needed to protect civilians from Colonel Qaddafi's advancing forces.

However, the words "all necessary measures" have led to some confusion, among both allies and rebels, about what could or should be done. There has been wrangling, too, over who should lead the operation once the Americans have carried out their promise, supposedly within the next few days, to withdraw to a merely supportive role.

It already looks as if establishing the no-fly zone was the easy part. The first barrage of nearly 120 Tomahawk cruise missiles from American warships and a British submarine, which struck 20 command-and-control sites, severely damaged the regime's ability to operate its air-defence system. Further salvos of cruise missiles and attacks by British, American and French aircraft over the next couple of nights appear to have finished the job, although Colonel Qaddafi may have saved some of his radar simply by turning it off.

By March 22nd a no-fly zone covered most of the rebel-held eastern coastal region. Combat air patrols were being flown by aircraft from countries including Canada, Spain, Denmark, Italy and Belgium. The much-heralded planes from Qatar were expected to turn up this weekend. Over the next few days the aim is to extend the zone eastwards until it covers the whole of the coast to the capital, Tripoli. A de facto maritime exclusion zone is also in operation, preventing Colonel Qaddafi from either resupplying his forces or shelling rebel-held cities from the sea.

How useful the no-fly zone will be in halting the regime's counter-offensive is debatable. Colonel Qaddafi may have had fewer than 40 operational combat aircraft, and a lot less now; but his fleet of attack helicopters can provide close support for ground troops, which at times has given him a critical advantage.

In some ways, the no-fly zone is as much a diplomatic as a military tool—a way of binding together a potentially fragile 14-nation alliance. But as the drafters of the resolution realised, it was never going to be enough on its own to prevent Colonel Qaddafi killing his people with impunity.

Even without their combat aircraft and helicopter gunships, Colonel Qaddafi's paramilitary militias are proving too well-trained and well-equipped for the motley rebel forces to withstand on their own. The spectacularly destructive results of the first French attack on the loyalist forces descending on Benghazi may have led the rebels to think that their fighting would be done for them and that their enemies would quickly crumble. But it had its effect because Colonel Qaddafi's men, in their desperate attempt to reach Benghazi before the allies could get their act together, had allowed their supply lines to become dangerously overstretched, leaving tanks, transporters and rocket launchers strung out along the desert road.

Benghazi and other rebel towns in the far east of the country, such as Tobruk, are now relatively secure from any attempt by the regime to recapture them—a huge change from only a few days ago. But the picture in towns that had already been reached by Colonel Qaddafi's forces is very different. An attempt on March 21st by the rebels to relieve the strategically important crossroads town of Ajdabya, 90 miles to the south-east of Benghazi, showed graphically what they are up against and the limits of their own military capability.

Emboldened by the coalition's demand that the regime pull back from Ajdabya, which was retaken by government forces last week, the rebels hoped that air attacks would do the same job for them as they had outside Benghazi. When jets were heard overhead, followed by the sound of big explosions, a few hundred rebels, toting a variety of light weapons from pick-up trucks, charged forward. But as shells and rockets began raining down on them, they fled as quickly as they had come. With little or no discipline or training, inadequate communications and no unified command structure, they are no match for Colonel Qaddafi's men.

Repulsing government forces from Ajdabya, which controls the water supply to Benghazi, is a key objective for the coalition and the rebels. Coalition aircraft began launching strikes on the loyalist forces on the 22nd, but if they decide to carry on fighting it may not be easy to dislodge them without significant casualties.

The situation in Libya's third-largest city, Misrata, which is only 130 miles east of Tripoli and has a population of more than half a million, is even more desperate. After more than a week of heavy but unequal fighting in which well over 100 people are reported to have died, the government announced on the 21st that it was in full control of the town. That now looks a somewhat premature claim. Loyalist tanks and artillery that had been sporadically bombarding the city for several weeks were silenced (at least temporarily) after pinpoint air strikes on the 23rd. But snipers continued their deadly work in central areas and around the main hospital.

In Tripoli, despite the nightly attacks on the regime's command-and-control centres, there is not much sign of the government losing its grip. The regular pro-Qaddafi demonstrations do not accurately reflect feeling within the capital, but nor is there much to hint at an incipient uprising against him.

A further complication for the coalition is the predictable exploitation of “human shields” (apparently, mostly volunteers) to protect high-value government targets. On March 21st an RAF Tornado aborted its mission close to Tripoli after it was warned that civilians, including some foreign journalists, were close to its target.

The strikes on Tripoli also raised the question of whether trying to kill Colonel Qaddafi himself was consistent with the terms of the Security Council resolution. The legal advice appears ambiguous. “Regime change” is not an allied goal, even though nobody believes that a peaceful, democratic Libya is possible while the colonel is still around. On the other hand, if it is clear (as it surely is) that Colonel Qaddafi has given orders that have resulted in the butchering of Libyan civilians, he is indeed a legitimate target. This seems to be the position of the British government, which, on March 21st, was quick to slap down the chief of the defence staff, Sir David Richards, when he grumpily told a BBC journalist that going after Colonel Qaddafi was “absolutely...not allowed”.

Who leads?

All this means that the coalition urgently needs to think hard about its strategic objectives and what it is prepared to do to achieve them. But before that, it must first sort out who is going to lead it.

The Americans were willing to accept that role in the first phase of the campaign because of the range of assets (from the initial cruise missile barrage, to electronic jamming, intelligence-gathering, mission co-ordination and fuel supply) that only they could bring to the speedy establishment of the no-fly zone. But in line with the new humility and commitment to multilateralism preached by Barack Obama, they were adamant that they would then hand over to somebody else.

That did not, however, mean falling in with Mr Sarkozy's preference for a Franco-British command. Mr Sarkozy argued from the start that he did not want the operation led by NATO, because NATO is seen in the Arab world as a tool of American power, and Arab support for the coalition is fragile anyway. The Americans, however, were reluctant to sideline NATO, and the British, for practical reasons, agreed. The result was a compromise reached late on March 22nd. Mr Sarkozy and Mr Obama agreed that NATO would assume day-to-day military command of the no-fly zone under Admiral James Stavrides, the American supreme allied commander in Europe. But reflecting some of NATO's own divisions, particularly the ambivalence of Turkey and Germany, it was agreed that political control would lie with the members of the coalition rather than with the North Atlantic Council, the main decision-making body of the alliance, which was expected to sign up to the fudge at a meeting on the 23rd.

Once it has decided exactly how it wants to operate, the coalition must quickly reach agreement on other things. The first is a realistic set of strategic goals. One has already probably been achieved. With no more than about 10,000 troops available to him and with any advance across the desert acutely exposed to coalition air strikes, Colonel Qaddafi has almost certainly lost his chance to reimpose his authority in the east.

However, it is less clear how far attacks from the air can help the civilians who are within Colonel Qaddafi's reach. The position of the few hundred government forces besieging Ajdabya looked precarious after air attacks on March 22nd, and they were said to be running out of ammunition. But bringing help to Misrata will test how far the coalition is ready to accept civilian casualties. Admiral Samuel Locklear, a coalition commander, says that all options are being considered, but some military analysts believe that rescuing the rebels in Misrata may not be possible without putting coalition forces on the ground, which no one is speaking of yet. Misrata is important not just for humanitarian reasons. If it cannot be saved, or the cost of doing so is deemed too high, the coalition will be sending a signal that for now there is not much it can do to prevent Colonel Qaddafi consolidating his position in the western half of the country.

What happens to Misrata, in other words, may define the extent of the coalition's objectives, at least in the short term. It must decide whether there is any realistic prospect of the rebels taking on Colonel Qaddafi's forces and power structure in the west. The rebels themselves are reported to be divided between those who believe that the regime can be toppled with one more push, as long as they are supported by coalition air power, and those who believe that a temporary stalemate makes more sense. During such a stalemate, the revolutionary council could turn itself into an interim government capable of speaking with a single voice, and much-needed military capabilities could be developed.

There may also be some tension within the coalition between those keen to attempt a speedy resolution and those who are resigned to a much lengthier engagement. Unless the regime collapses from within, patience is likely to be the better bet. Without substantial defections from the loyalist army, the rebels cannot hope to become a cohesive military force unless they receive weapons and training from outside, which would seem to be in breach of the UN arms embargo.

The coalition must decide whether it is willing to provide that kind of support, and then how far it is prepared to go to help the rebels reunite the country. Both actions would stretch the meaning of the Security Council resolution, but not necessarily to breaking point. A short-term partition of Libya might be bearable, but a long-term one raises the prospect of an internal arms race, rapid economic decline and Colonel Qaddafi resuming his sponsorship of international terrorism.

Another pressing issue for the coalition will be the enforcement of sanctions against the rump Qaddafi regime and whether the rebels can gain access to any of Libya's (diminished) oil revenues. The biggest refinery, at Ras Lanuf, lies in what is likely to be the rebel's area of control; so too do many of the oil-fields. On the other hand, reports that the colonel has \$6.4 billion-worth of gold stashed away in the country's central bank in Tripoli gives him a potential advantage in any war of attrition. If he can liquidate this hoard into cash, arms and food, his chances of clinging on indefinitely will be boosted.

Given the range of uncertainties, the question of targeting Colonel Qaddafi himself becomes more relevant. Without him, it is hard to see the regime surviving for more than a few weeks. The coalition will not change its declared position that killing the Libyan war leader is not on its list of objectives. But were it somehow to happen, few would complain.

Wenn Gaddafi mit blutiger Rache droht

Durfte der Sicherheitsrat der Vereinten Nationen die Staaten zu militärischer Gewalt in Libyen ermächtigen? Die unter Hochdruck erlassene Resolution 1973 ist durch die Entwicklung des Völkerrechts gedeckt. Das Recht zum Angriff auf Gaddafi enthält sie nicht.

Von Christian Tomuschat

23. März 2011

Bei der Bewertung der Vorgänge in Libyen darf trotz aller machtpolitischen Hintergründe nicht außer Acht gelassen werden, dass der Urheber der mit der Resolution 1973 vom 17. März 2011 eingerichteten Flugverbotszone und der damit verbundenen Ermächtigung zur Anwendung militärischer Gewalt der Sicherheitsrat der Vereinten Nationen ist. In seinem Artikel in der F.A.Z. behandelt der Hamburger Rechtswissenschaftler Reinhard Merkel handelt die Problematik so ab, als ob es um Auseinandersetzungen im klassischen zwischenstaatlichen System gehen würde ([Völkerrecht contra Bürgerkrieg: Intervention gegen Gaddafi ist illegitim](#)).

Alle seine Verweisungen beziehen sich auf das schlichte Denkmodell eines Gegensatzes von Staat zu Staat. Aber der Sicherheitsrat ist das Organ einer internationalen Gemeinschaft, die alle 192 Staaten der Erde umfasst. Seine Beschlüsse sind nicht von Eigeninteressen diktiert, sondern bilden sich in einer mühevollen Konsenssuche nicht nur zwischen den fünfzehn Mitgliedern des Rates, sondern durchweg auch in weitestmöglicher Abstimmung mit den übrigen Mitgliedern der Weltorganisation. Tatsächlich haben ja auch die Staaten der Arabischen Liga ihre Zustimmung zur Einrichtung der Flugverbotszone erteilt. An der Legitimität des Sicherheitsrates lässt sich also nicht rütteln. Merkel geht an dieser Logik völlig vorbei. Seine Schlussfolgerungen vermögen daher nicht zu überzeugen.

Das Problem innerstaatlicher Konflikte

Nach der UN-Charta trägt der Sicherheitsrat die „Hauptverantwortung für die Wahrung des Weltfriedens und der internationalen Sicherheit“. Ursprünglich war diese Wendung, die im englischen Original „international peace and security“ lautet, als Verweis auf Streitigkeiten verstanden worden, bei denen Staaten miteinander im Konflikt liegen. Allen an der Gründungskonferenz von San Francisco Beteiligten stand im Jahre 1945 noch der Zweite Weltkrieg vor Augen, wo sich den Achsenmächten eine umfassende Weltallianz von Staaten entgegengestellt hatte. Noch in einem deutschen Kommentarwerk zur Charta aus dem Jahre 1991 wurde die Auffassung vertreten, dass Frieden „die Abwesenheit organisierter Gewaltanwendung zwischen Staaten“ bedeute.

Danach wäre das Eingreifen des Sicherheitsrates in Libyen ein Fall unzulässiger Kompetenzerweiterung. Die Praxis ist vor allem angesichts der Tatsache, dass die Zahl der innerstaatlichen bewaffneten Konflikte ständig zugenommen hat und diejenige der zwischenstaatlichen Konflikte mittlerweile bei weitem übersteigt, über diese enge Auslegung seit langem hinweggeschritten. Gelegentlich hatte die Weltorganisation sich zwar schon in den ersten Jahrzehnten von der Grundsatzlinie entfernt. Immer wieder war vor allem Südafrika wegen seiner rassistischen Politik kritisiert worden. Aber die gegen das Apartheidland gefassten Beschlüsse galten nicht als Präzedenzfälle; Südafrika wurde als ein Außenseiter der Weltpolitik mit Pariastatus behandelt.

Rechtfertigung durch menschliches Leid

Vorsichtige Annäherung an ein weiteres Verständnis des Begriffs des „internationalen Friedens“ brachte nach dem zweiten Golfkrieg die Resolution 688 vom 5. April 1991, wo der Sicherheitsrat Anordnungen zum Schutze der im Norden des Irak verfolgten Kurden auf die Erwägung stützte, dass die durch die Verfolgungsmaßnahmen ausgelösten Flüchtlingsströme über internationale Grenzen hinweg zu einer Störung des Weltfriedens und der internationalen Sicherheit in der Region führen könnten.

Zu einer grundsätzlichen Abkehr vom Merkmal der Internationalität im Sinne von Zwischenstaatlichkeit kam es aber erst im Rahmen der Resolution 746 vom 17. März 1992 zu Somalia, wo der Sicherheitsrat sein Eingreifen mit einem Hinweis auf das „Ausmaß des durch den Konflikt verursachten menschlichen Leidens“ rechtfertigte. Damit war die Tür aufgestoßen zu einer neuen Sicht der Kompetenznormen in der Charta. Bald schon folgten etwa Beschlüsse zu Haiti, wo angeführt wurde, dass es geboten sei, zur Wiederherstellung der demokratischen Verhältnisse in dem Lande Zwangsmaßnahmen anzuordnen (Resolution 940, 31. Juli 1994). Es ist also keineswegs das erste Mal, dass der Sicherheitsrat sich veranlasst sieht, in eine interne Auseinandersetzung einzugreifen, um menschliche Not zu beheben.

Rechtlich lässt sich die Umdeutung des Merkmals „international“ vor allem mit der Ausweitung des Menschenrechtsgedankens stützen. Noch bis in die sechziger Jahre des vorigen Jahrhunderts wurden die Menschenrechte meist als ein der ausschließlich innerstaatlichen Zuständigkeit unterfallender Sachkomplex betrachtet. Vor allem die sozialistischen Staaten hielten an dieser restriktiven Sicht entschieden fest. Spätestens seit dem Zustandekommen der beiden UN-Menschenrechtspakte aus dem Jahre 1966 ließ sich diese souveränitätsbetonte Sicht nicht mehr ernstlich vertreten. So wurde auch bei der Wiener Weltmensenrechtskonferenz im Juni 1993 einhellig festgestellt, dass die Förderung und der Schutz der Menschenrechte ein legitimes Anliegen der internationalen Gemeinschaft seien.

Internationalen Wertmaßstäben verpflichtet

Der Sicherheitsrat ist nicht das Hauptorgan des Menschenrechtsschutzes. Grundsätzlich obliegt es vor allem dem UN-Menschenrechtsrat, mit den Mitteln friedlicher Überzeugungsbildung auf Regierungen einzuwirken, in deren Herrschaftsbereich Missstände aufgetreten sind. Nur wenn das Unrecht unerträgliche Dimensionen annimmt, insbesondere wenn internationale Straftaten wie Kriegsverbrechen, Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit oder Völkermord begangen werden oder auch nur drohen, fühlt sich der Sicherheitsrat veranlasst, von seinen Kompetenzen nach dem Kapitel VII der Charta Gebrauch zu machen, aber selbstverständlich auch, wenn befürchtet werden muss, dass von den inneren Unruhen schwere Beeinträchtigungen des internationalen Friedens ausgehen.

Reinhard Merkel irrt sich, wenn er meint, dass der Sicherheitsrat im Falle Libyens lediglich nach Vorwänden gesucht habe. Die Gefangenen in den libyschen Foltergefängnissen sind eine Realität ebenso wie die Drohungen aus dem Munde des Gewaltherrschers, nach seinem Siege blutige Rache an allen Aufständischen zu üben - und eben nicht die Regeln des humanitären Rechts einzuhalten. Externe Legitimität gegenüber der Völkergemeinschaft genießt der Diktator schon lange nicht mehr. Exemplarisch zeigt sich an dem Eingreifen, dass die Staatengemeinschaft sich eben trotz aller mitunter peinlichen Anbiederungsversuche auch westlicher Staatsführer internationalen Wertmaßstäben verbunden fühlt.

Als fast arrogant muss es demgegenüber der Leser empfinden, dass Merkel die Herstellung freiheitlicher Verhältnisse in Libyen von vornherein für aussichtslos hält. Für eine unterdrückte Bevölkerung kann es nicht „illegitim“ (Merkel) sein, sich ihre Freiheit auch mit gewaltsamen Methoden zurückzuholen, wenn sie von einem Tyrannen gezwungen wird, von diesem letzten Mittel Gebrauch zu machen. Insgesamt ist Merkel in einem merkwürdigen Misstrauen gegenüber einer Opposition befangen, die denselben Weg gehen will wie die beiden Nachbarländer Ägypten und Tunesien. Natürlich gibt es Ungewissheiten. Aber das Plädoyer für willfährigen Pazifismus läuft auf nichts anderes als eine Duldung missbräuchlicher Herrschaftsausübung hinaus, die nach den Schrecknissen der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur mit ihrem Mitläufertum als keine vertretbare Option mehr erscheint.

Die Einrichtung einer Flugverbotszone über dem Territorium eines Landes stellt unbestritten einen schweren Eingriff in dessen Hoheitsrechte dar, selbst wenn zunächst ein solches Verbot nur in Kraft gesetzt und noch nicht vollzogen wird.

Deswegen bedurfte es dazu einer Ermächtigung des Sicherheitsrates nach Kapitel VII der Charta. Zu Recht ist daher von den Befürwortern des Flugverbots der Weg nach New York eingeschlagen worden.

Der Beschluss ist unangreifbar

Die Resolution 1973 vom 17. März 2011 ist in ihren wesentlichen Abschnitten nur knapp gefasst. Sie stellt in ihrer Präambel zunächst fest, dass es den libyschen Behörden obliege, für den Schutz ihrer Bevölkerung zu sorgen (Prinzip der Schutzverantwortung), sie verurteilt die in Libyen begangenen schweren und systematischen Menschenrechtsverletzungen und erwägt, dass die ausgedehnten und systematischen Angriffe gegen die Zivilbevölkerung die Schwere eines Verbrechens gegen die Menschlichkeit erreichen können. Auf dieser Grundlage wird sodann im operativen Teil der Resolution die Einrichtung einer Flugverbotszone „zum Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung“ beschlossen.

Ausdrücklich werden überdies alle Mitgliedstaaten ermächtigt, entweder allein handelnd oder über regionale Organisationen oder Mechanismen „alle notwendigen Maßnahmen“ zur Durchsetzung des Flugverbots zu ergreifen. Die Wendung „alle erforderlichen Maßnahmen“ hat jedenfalls seit der gegen den Irak ergangenen Resolution 678 vom 29. November 1990 eine klare Bedeutung: Auch Waffen dürfen eingesetzt werden. Angreifbar ist dieser Beschluss nicht. Im System der Charta wird das ganze Vertrauen auf den Verhandlungs- und Abstimmungsprozess im Sicherheitsrat mit seinen vielfältigen Hemmnissen gesetzt. Bewusst ist ihm ein weitreichender Bewertungsspielraum eingeräumt worden.

Pflicht der Unparteilichkeit

Zu den Pflichten einer Koalition, welche von einer Handlungsermächtigung des Sicherheitsrates Gebrauch machen will, gehört es, den dort abgesteckten Rahmen einzuhalten. Werden die entsprechenden Beschlüsse willkürlich interpretiert, so wird nicht nur dem Sicherheitsrat selbst Schaden zugefügt, es wächst auch die Gefahr, dass eine Vetomacht künftig davon Abstand nimmt, sich wohlwollend zu enthalten. Mehrfach hat es in der Tat Versuche gegeben, mit gewagten Auslegungen die Anwendung militärischer Gewalt zu rechtfertigen. So beriefen sich die Vereinigten Staaten und Großbritannien bei ihrer Invasion des Irak im Jahre 2003 auf die beiden Sicherheitsratsresolutionen 678 und 687 von 1990 und 1991 aus dem zweiten Golfkrieg, die längst ihre Anwendbarkeit verloren hatten. Beifall hat diese These kaum gefunden.

Für die Beseitigung des Terrorregimes von Oberst Gaddafi gibt die Resolution 1973 keine Handhabe. Eine Parteinahme für die Aufständischen enthält sie nicht. Mit der Errichtung der Flugverbotszone, zu der auch die Bekämpfung der libyschen Flugabwehr mit ihren über das Land verteilten Stellungen gehört, hat sie sich insoweit - abgesehen von ihren Anordnungen zum Waffenembargo und zum Einfrieren von Vermögenswerten der Machthaber - erschöpft. Sonstige Angriffe auf die Hauptstadt Tripolis dürften von ihr nicht mehr gedeckt sein, auch wenn der Abgang Gaddafis erstrebtes Ziel bleibt.

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Fumbling Toward Fukushima

Japanese Nuclear Plant Operator Plagued by Scandal

By [Markus Becker](#)

For years, Tepco, the operator of the Fukushima power plant, has been widely criticized for deadly accidents and improper inspections. The Fukushima disaster is the tragic nadir in a history of poor management at the company's nuclear facilities.

It must have been a difficult day for Tsunehisa Katsumata. In 2003, the then-president of the Tokyo Electric Power Company, or Tepco, gave a speech addressing what, until then, had been the biggest scandal in the history of Japan's largest energy utility company. In 29 incidents the year before, nuclear power plant maintenance documents had been falsified and Tepco had been forced to take 17 nuclear reactors temporarily offline as a result. Tepco CEO Hiroshi Araki and four other top executives resigned.

In unflinching words, Katsumata took his company to task for its shortcomings and announced no less than a new corporate culture, one with a strict code of ethics and a policy of open and honest communication with the public. Today, though, those words must ring hollow to the people who have received high levels of radiation following the accident at the Fukushima I power plant, and to those who have been evacuated and may never be able to return to their homes located near the plant again.

The tone of Katsumata's speech was clear: The numerous past incidents were in no way isolated mistakes made by individual employees. Instead, they were the result of a corporate culture at Tepco that had allowed hair-raising breaches in safety to occur.

A Nuclear Division Spins out of Control

"First, we must admit that we had no clear rules to judge whether equipment was fit for service," Katsumata [states in his speech](#), which is still available on Tepco's website today. He said that there were no rules addressing the fact that machinery and equipment generally wear away or crack with the passage of time, so equipment was used as long as such flaws didn't pose "safety hazards."

And therein lies the problem: When something was unclear, Tepco engineers apparently made arbitrary decisions. "They repeatedly made personal decisions based on their own idea of safety," Katsumata said. But it is clear that those ideas of safety weren't stringent enough. "Nuclear division members tended to regard a stable supply of electricity as the ultimate objective," he said.

Over time, the nuclear division appeared to spin out of control, according to Katsumata's assessment. "The engineers were so confident in their knowledge of nuclear power that they came to hold the erroneous belief that they would not have to report problems to the national government as long as safety was maintained," he said. In the end, "they went as far as to delete factual data and falsify inspection and repair records."

He also attributed another dangerous trait to the engineers. The high degree of technical specialization required in nuclear power generation, he warned, had "hampered flexible personnel changes in the nuclear power division, and as

a result, this division became a homogeneous and exclusive circle of engineers who defied checks by other divisions, including the management."

The 2004 manuscript is only one testament to the nuclear power giant's troubled approach to crisis management. Both before and after the speech, an impressive list of incidents continued to grow, including deadly accidents.

- During the 1980s and 1990s, in several instances Tepco falsified data in voluntary inspections, including the number of cracks in the reactor pressure vessels.
- In 1991 and 1992, the safety vessel of Reactor 1 at the Fukushima plant, which had gone online in 1971, was tested for leaks. According to Tepco, workers pumped air into the safety vessel in order to reduce the rate of leaks.
- In 2000, a reactor at the Fukushima nuclear plant had to be shut down because of a hole in a fuel rod. Similar incidents had already occurred in 1997 and 1994 in which radiation had been released.
- In 2002, cracks in water pipes were discovered at the nuclear power plant.
- In 2002, an engineer with the US firm General Electric, which manufactured three of the six reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, also raised the alarm bell. Inspections had not been carried out at a total of 13 reactors at Tepco power plants. He showed the Japanese nuclear regulatory authority 29 instances of falsified data and cover-ups, a development that led to the resignations in 2002 of top Tepco executives.
- In 2006, radioactive steam leaked from a pipe at the Fukushima plant.
- The company was also accused the same year of falsifying data about coolant water temperatures in 1985 and 1988. The data had then been used during mandatory inspections of the plant in 2005. In 2007, further falsified reactor data from Tepco emerged.
- In 2007, at least eight people died when the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant was badly damaged in an earthquake. Pipes burst, fire broke out and radioactive water leaked from a spent fuel pool. Tepco had to decontaminate the affected building. The nuclear power plant remained closed for one year so earthquake safety -- which had allegedly already been good enough -- could be improved. Later it was determined that Tepco had missed 117 inspections at the site.
- In March 2009, another fire broke out at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant, resulting in one employee injury.
- On March 2, 2011, just days before the start of the current earthquake catastrophe, Japan's nuclear regulators lobbed accusations of mass negligence against Tepco. It alleged that Tepco had failed to inspect 33 pieces of equipment at the Fukushima-Daiichi plant, one of the sites of the current catastrophe, including central cooling system elements in the six reactors, and spent fuel pools that hadn't been inspected according to regulations. The company has since admitted to having made the errors.
- At the same time, Tepco also reported to the nuclear regulatory authority that it had not only failed to do the 33 inspections at the Fukushima-Daiichi plant, but also 19 further inspections at the nearby Fukushima-Daini plant.

- Some experts had already been warning since the 1970s that the Mark 1 reactor type, produced by US manufacturer General Electric and also called the "Fukushima design," was not constructed to survive a combination of an earthquake and tsunami. Only days after the earthquake, two engineers who helped build the plant confirmed at a press conference that serious construction errors had been made. Many backup systems for emergencies had not been built at the plant.

'What is Going on Here?'

Looking at the situation today, statements made by Tepco spokesman Hiroyuki Kuroda in March 2004 seem bitterly ironic. He pledged that Tepco had "learned numerous valuable lessons" from the 2002 scandal. "One of the most important was that information should always be shared," he said.

But the company's approach to public information seemed to be precisely the opposite during the past two years. Just as it had in previous years, Tepco appears to have reported to the Japanese government only those things it was unable to keep secret. It was only when the shell of one of the reactor buildings exploded live on television on March 12 that the world became aware of the true extent of the accident.

As a result, five days after the tsunami, Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan himself visited executives at Tepco headquarters and shouted at flabbergasted engineers: "What is going on here?" He reportedly accused the Tepco officials of placing the well-being of their own company above that of the Japanese people.

"It is not a matter of whether Tepco collapses, it is a matter of whether Japan goes wrong," he is reported to have said. Afterwards, Kan named himself the head of a crisis team made up of government and Tepco officials.

Critics Claim Tepco Did More to Save Plant than Ensure Safety

By doing so, he may have helped prevent even worse things from happening because the attitude that seems to have permeated Tepco -- namely that the company and its property should be given the greatest priority -- appears to remain in place, even in the face of a nuclear catastrophe. The engineers reportedly considered pumping ocean water mixed with boric acid into the damaged Reactor 1 as early as the morning of March 12 in order to prevent a threatening total core meltdown.

The problem was that the action would have been equivalent to abandoning the reactor altogether because the salt water would have caused damage that could have permanently destroyed the plant. The engineers waited for hours before they finally begin pumping sea water at 8:20 p.m. local time into the reactor. A Tepco spokesman said the company had waited until the right time, taking into account the security of the entire facility.

Critics, however, hold another view. Tepco "hesitated because it tried to protect its assets," Akira Omoto, a former Tepco executive and a member of the Japan Atomic Energy Commission, [told](#) the *Wall Street Journal*. Another government official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, told the newspaper: "This disaster is 60 percent man-made. They failed in their initial response. It's like Tepco dropped and lost a 100 yen coin while trying to pick up a 10 yen coin."

03/23/2011 10:36 AM

SPIEGEL Interview with Ex-ECB Chief Economist Issing

'The Euro Will Exist for a Long Time to Come'

The European Union is hoping to agree on a lasting solution to the euro crisis this week. SPIEGEL spoke with former European Central Bank chief economist Otmar Issing about what to do about heavily indebted countries like Ireland and Greece and whether leaving the euro zone makes sense for Germany.

SPIEGEL: Mr. Issing, at the most recent summit, European Union member states agreed on a package to rescue the euro that includes, among other things, augmenting the crisis fund. Will this safeguard the common currency?

Issing: The euro is now on stronger footing. In that sense, things could have been worse. But the resolutions are still a far cry from what the monetary union needs. The fundamental problem hasn't been solved.

SPIEGEL: What's the obstacle?

Issing: Before the euro was introduced, former Chancellor Helmut Kohl said: The monetary union will not function without a political union. But a political union of Europe doesn't exist, and it won't happen in the foreseeable future. That's why we need mechanisms that force the member states to pursue solid financial policies. These mechanisms are missing, and even the most recent decisions reached in Brussels can do little to change this.

SPIEGEL: The EU heads of state want to significantly tighten the Stability Pact so that debt crises can be prevented before they begin. Why isn't this enough?

Issing: My confidence in the sustainability of such resolutions has always been limited. But it was completely shaken when Germany and France mutually killed the pact in 2003. At the time, several European finance ministers said to me: How are we to convince our citizens to support a stability pact if not even Germany wants to abide by it?

SPIEGEL: But now the European Commission in Brussels is receiving additional tools to monitor national budget policy. Isn't that a big improvement?

Issing: Ultimately, the European Commission cannot impose any effective sanctions, because the national governments make all key decisions, so we have potential violators passing judgment on current violators. The jury is biased. In addition to political control, another, incorruptible authority is needed.

SPIEGEL: And who exactly should that be?

Issing: The market. The decisions of investors in the financial markets constitute an additional control mechanism. A country that behaves correctly pays low interest rates, while one that lives beyond its means pays higher interest.

SPIEGEL: With all due respect to your confidence in the markets, isn't it rather naïve, given the fact that investors have also lent money to ailing governments in the past without hesitation?

Issing: I have never been one of those people who trusted the market completely. The most important thing is how the government sets the underlying conditions. And this is where the euro has its greatest shortcomings. Under the

Maastricht Treaty, EU members agreed that they would not be liable for each other's sovereign debt. But the markets never trusted this pledge and, as it turned out, they were right. This is the key starting point for a reform. It has to be clear to investors that they are partly liable when a country can no longer service its debt.

SPIEGEL: But this is precisely what is happening at the moment. The German government has made sure that private creditors will be involved on a case-by-case basis when a country can no longer service its debt. That's progress, isn't it?

Issing: Case-by-case means that the issue is ultimately resolved politically. However, I doubt that politicians will administer such bitter medicine when push comes to shove. That's why the involvement of private creditors must occur automatically and in accordance with set rules. This is what I envision: As soon as public money is spent, private investors must also be involved and relinquish portions of their claims or agree to extending maturity dates. It is part of the market economy that those who buy securities and collect higher interest rates for doing so should carry part of the risk when something goes wrong. Taxpayers shouldn't always be footing the bill.

SPIEGEL: The question is whether this is even feasible. When the German government was thinking about the involvement of private creditors several months ago, investors, fearing losses, sold off their Greek and Portuguese bonds en masse. It's like trying to extinguish a fire by pouring on more fuel. Can that be a permanent solution?

Issing: At the time, the German government didn't make it sufficiently clear that the involvement of private creditors was only intended for the future. The investors feared losses on their existing investments and were anxious as a result. But this doesn't have to happen if the government makes its plans sufficiently transparent.

SPIEGEL: EU leaders want to augment the bailout fund so that it can mobilize €440 billion (\$620 billion). The eventual permanent bailout fund is to have more than €500 billion at its disposal. Are these dimensions necessary?

Issing: In my view, the dimensions are not the key issue. More important are the conditions under which the fund distributes its money. It would be fatal, however, if the sheer size of the bailout fund tempted those in charge of it to dole out the money, thinking: Now we have so much money available, so we should use it. The fund has to be big enough to impress the markets, but it should also be used sparingly.

SPIEGEL: Responding to a German initiative, the euro countries want to make a pact to improve their competitiveness. Do you think this is a good idea?

Issing: The pact stems from the realization that the success of a monetary union depends on each individual member. Not all euro countries have to march in step, but at least they should be moving in the same direction. But it would be problematic to demand, in the name of such a pact, that the Irish increase their corporate taxes, for example.

SPIEGEL: But that's a legitimate concern. The EU gives the Irish money, and they use it to fund low corporate tax rates. Is that a good model for a future-oriented European fiscal policy?

Issing: The Irish will point out, with some justification, that the EU forcing them to raise tax rates undermines their prospects for growth. This cannot be in the interest of the other countries.

SPIEGEL: Do you expect that Portugal and Spain will have to resort to the bailout fund?

'I Am One of Those Idiots'

Issing: I would rule it out for Spain. The country is finally on the road to reform. For example, it is cleaning up rigidity in the labor market stemming from the days of the Franco dictatorship. Portugal still stands a chance of making do without assistance.

SPIEGEL: Even more pressing is the question of Greek debt. Do you believe Athens will be able to raise money on its own once the assistance runs out?

Issing: It was important to help Greece in its acute crisis to prevent it from spreading to other countries. But as soon as the other countries are out of danger, the Greek government debt will have to be restructured. This can be done by cutting that debt or by extending the terms of the loans, but there is no getting around a debt restructuring, no matter how you calculate it.

SPIEGEL: Can banks and insurance companies cope with such a measure?

Issing: Lengthening loan periods would be more palatable than a haircut. It will not force the banks to write off their claims. They'll get their money back; it'll just take longer.

SPIEGEL: Even should its debt be restructured, Greece would still struggle for years to pay off its loans. Wouldn't it be better to simply exclude the country from the monetary union?

Issing: Such debates are superfluous because they ignore reality. You need to amend agreements to eject a country. This can only be done unanimously. No "candidate" would agree to it. It's a complete waste of time to even think about it.

SPIEGEL: And what if a country wants to leave the monetary union of its own accord?

Issing: I think that would be political and economic suicide.

SPIEGEL: Does that also apply to Germany?

Issing: It also applies to Germany, but in a different sense.

SPIEGEL: That also, of course, means that Germany is chained to the euro, for better or worse. Does that not mean that a transfer union becomes inevitable?

Issing: It depends what you mean by the term. At a joint panel discussion last summer, former Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer claimed: Anyone who denies that we have been living in a transfer union for a long time is an idiot.

SPIEGEL: How did you respond?

Issing: I told him that I am one of those idiots. Of course, there are already many European financial transfers today: agricultural subsidies, structural aid, the cohesion fund. But these tools are earmarked and limited with respect to amount. In this case, however, we are talking about possible transfers for which there are practically no upper limits. It's a completely different dimension.

SPIEGEL: But their purpose is to save the euro. Isn't helping member states in trouble part of European solidarity?

Issing: No. In fact, the notion of the strong helping the weak is not the issue here. This is about those who abide by the rules paying for those who break the rules. This isn't solidarity, but a perversion of it.

SPIEGEL: How so?

Issing: It's simple: A country like Germany, which behaves in accordance with the rules, has to support the Irish. Meanwhile, per capita income in Dublin is higher than it is in Berlin. Is that fair? If we take this approach in the long term, we will end up with a German population with the kinds of anti-European sentiments I would find horrifying. The German population's identification with Europe is already declining to a disconcerting extent.

SPIEGEL: What does this mean for the euro?

Issing: It certainly doesn't mean that it will be dissolved. It's a good bet that the euro will continue to exist for a long time to come. The question is not whether the euro will survive, but which euro will survive. If everyone is liable for everyone else, even in the case of bad policies, it will become more and more difficult for the European Central Bank to defend the stability of the euro.

SPIEGEL: Will we see higher inflation?

Issing: History has taught us that solid public finances and stable money belong together. However, I don't believe that there will be significantly higher inflation. The ECB has a clear mandate and is sufficiently independent to keep this from happening. But tensions would rise considerably within the monetary union.

SPIEGEL: What would happen?

Issing: If fiscal policy gets out of hand, the imbalances between sound and unsound countries increase. Growth declines and unemployment rises. In short, the euro zone does not become a center of economic strength. The euro is weakened.

SPIEGEL: To help highly indebted countries, the future bailout fund is to be permitted to buy up the bonds of at-risk countries. How do you feel about that?

Issing: It's a completely wrong approach. Bond purchases tie up a great deal of money, provide little relief and are difficult to reconcile with the democratic principles of our constitution. The most important right granted to parliament is to decide on the government's finances. This right is undermined when key decisions are made in European institutions that lack adequate democratic legitimacy.

SPIEGEL: Does this mean that you wouldn't help needy countries at all in the future?

Issing: Not at all, but the basic principle must be that assistance only be provided under certain conditions.

SPIEGEL: On the other hand, as an experienced central banker, you ought to be pleased that the ECB has been relieved of a burden now that it no longer has to buy up bonds.

Issing: I don't want a situation in which you have to choose between the plague and cholera.

SPIEGEL: Was it a mistake for the ECB to have purchased bonds?

Issing: I swore to myself that I would never comment on and certainly would not criticize the institution for which I worked so long. But no one will deny that this case is extremely problematic and borders on the impermissible. In the final analysis, the ECB was the only institution capable of taking action. That's why the expansion of such a crisis mechanism, which also unburdens the central bank, makes fundamental sense.

SPIEGEL: Bundesbank President Axel Weber has clearly spoken out against this decision. He resigned because he refuses to support the ECB's policy. Was that the right step?

Issing: If someone is convinced that such positions are inconsistent with his conscience, he must be prepared to bear the consequences.

SPIEGEL: Mr. Issing, thank you for this interview.

Interview conducted by Christian Reiermann and Michael Sauga

Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan

The rhetoric of intervention

On "taking sides in a civil war"

The Economist Mar 21st 2011, 13:49 by W.W. | IOWA CITY

AMERICA'S intervention in the Libyan civil war naturally raises questions of justification. Fernando Tesón, a professor of law at Florida State and author of "Humanitarian Intervention: An Inquiry into Law and Morality", [lays out the options](#) and ranks them from what he takes to be the most to least compelling to the American public:



- 1) The most compelling: self-defense; responding to aggression against the U.S.
- 2) Using force to secure a resource or interest of the first magnitude for the U.S.
- 3) Defending a close ally who has been attacked
- 4) Protecting innocent civilians from a massive, deadly threat
- 5) Intervening in a foreign civil war on the side of friends
- 6) Bullying someone we don't like

It would be nice to see polling data to this effect, but this certainly sounds right. Mr Tesón comments:

Now in Libya 1), 2), and 3) are unavailable. That leaves 4), 5), and 6), and the Obama administration (and the U.N. Security Council) chose 4) as the rationale for the operation, protecting civilians, even though what the United States is really doing is 5), intervening in a civil war on the side of the rebels. But imagine how public opinion would react should the President announce the truth: that it is helping the people of Libya depose a tyrant. This is (U.N-authorized) humanitarian intervention, which seems more palatable than the more offensive-sounding "taking sides in a civil war."

It seems to me obviously correct to characterise the military conflict between Libyan factions as a "civil war", and thus to characterise the actions of the Americans, French, and British, which target the Libyan state's air defences, as "taking sides in a civil war". However, as Mr Tesón suggests, this framing may very well make a difference to public opinion, which is why I felt as though I was drawing a line and stepping across it in my opening sentence by choosing to refer to the war between Libyans as the "Libyan civil war". But that's what it is!

It seems important to note, however, that humanitarian intervention often requires taking sides in a civil war. Thus a proponent of allied attacks on the Libyan government's air defences might argue that taking sides in the civil war is *incidental* to the intended aim of protecting civilians. But then an opponent of allied intervention might argue that this argument makes it a mite too easy for the duplicitous to hide the intention to take a side in a civil war—to provide military assistance to a native insurgency's attempt to overthrow their government—behind the rhetoric of humanitarian intervention. Calling a spade a spade, or a civil war a civil war, in this case I think tends to subtly insinuate that those publicly advocating humanitarian intervention privately want their state to use its taxpayer-financed military resources to topple a dictator who poses no threat to America or its allies, whether or not that actually reduces suffering and death relative to the no-intervention baseline.

Of course, this is unfair to sincere advocates of humanitarian intervention who really do see taking sides in a civil war as incidental to the admirable aim of protecting the innocent. The impulse to avoid this unfairness combined with an aspiration toward neutrality can, I think, lead journalists to describe the situation in Libya elliptically. For example, in [the story](#) at the top of the *New York Times* website's home page as I write this, there is no mention of a civil war. Searching the *Times*' for the string "Libya civil war" produces recent hits only to Ross Douthat columns and blog posts opposing American involvement, underscoring my suspicion that the fact Libya is in the midst of a civil war is considered to be something one would mention only if one opposed intervening in it. Indeed, the *Times* seems subtly to affirm President Obama's claim that Colonel Qaddafi's government has "lost legitimacy" (as if it previously had any!) by choosing to refer to the Libyan government as "the government of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi" and the Libyan military as "Colonel Qaddafi's forces". This personalisation of the state suggests that the Libyan government does not have popular support, which I am not sure is true, and that its attempt to suppress a faction seeking to overthrow it is the act not of a government with popular support (which, for all I know, it may be), but of an autocrat clinging to power against the will of people. No doubt these word choices were made in the attempt to characterise the situation as objectively as possible, but I suspect that the attempt to avoid the biased rhetorical charge that seems to creep in when the situation is described frankly as "taking sides in a civil war" only introduces a different, no less worrying bias.

In any case, it is never not a good time to [read Orwell](#).

Libya: It depends what you mean by "succeed"

The Economist online Mar 22nd 2011, 17:12 by M.S.

THE spectacle of Americans, British and French [squabbling over control](#) of the attack on Libya may bring back nostalgic memories of Tobruk and Normandy for a few members of the greatest generation, but it doesn't inspire a lot of confidence in the mission's success. Then again, it's not really clear that we know what we mean by "success" in Libya. We might look at whether Euro-American forces, and the odd Arab contribution, are likely to achieve their war aims. But those war aims are rather vague. [UN Security Council Resolution 1973](#) authorises the use of force to protect the Libyan population against the forces of Muammar Qaddafi ("to take all necessary measures to protect civilians under threat of attack in the country"), but that's a potentially impossible, broad and long-lasting mandate. It would be clearer if Western countries, having demanded that Mr Qaddafi relinquish power, defined that as the aim of the intervention as well. But that would never have gotten a UN authorisation, and indeed Resolution 1973 specifically prohibits the establishment of a foreign occupying force. We might on the other hand view the war aims as Barack Obama has defined them: stopping the advance of Mr Qaddafi's forces and giving the popular uprising a chance to take power itself, if it has the wherewithal to do so. The problem there is that you could wind up with the same situation Europe and America found themselves in back in 1992 in Bosnia, holding in place a murderous standoff with no opportunity for either side to win.



But when we look back at the Libya intervention in five or ten years, it's likely that the question of whether or not we "won" in Libya will be determined less by whether or not concrete objectives were attained than by how the intervention is framed. In a 2006 book, "[Failing to Win: Perception of Victory and Defeat in International Politics](#)", Dominic Johnson and Dominic Tierney proposed a model for how national publics come to view military conflicts as victories or defeats. The results are not straightforward: military defeats often become victories in the popular imagination, and vice versa. Messrs Johnson and Tierney propose an interaction between two processes: "scorekeeping", as the public processes news and matches it against goals or expectations, and "match-fixing", in which publics, prodded and nudged by governments and media, shape the expectations that form the playing field on which the conflict plays out. Messrs Johnson and Tierney lean towards the view that match-fixing is more important: "predisposing factors often fix the match so that one side is bound to win, almost irrespective of its gains or losses on the ground."

It may be that some of the more confusing things about America's tactics in Libya can be explained by match-fixing. The United States may not be willing to commit the military force that would be needed to guarantee driving Muammar Qaddafi from power. In that case, the way to guarantee production of "victory" in Libya is to define the war aims as something like "striking a blow" against Mr Qaddafi. On the other hand, an open-ended commitment to preventing tyranny and regime atrocity seems almost guaranteed to fail to produce victory. On the third hand, it seems a bit perverse to judge the performance of our political leaders based on how well we think they're manipulating us. It's our job to try to focus as little as possible on how opinion shapers try to produce "victories" in the public mind, and instead to look at what's actually happening in Libya. It might, however, be useful to look at what the Libyan public defines as their expectations of "victory", and whether what America and Europe are doing right now makes any sense in their eyes.

(Photo credit: AFP)

Fundamental Contradictions

NYT March 22, 2011

[Richard Fontaine](#) is a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security and a former foreign policy adviser to Senator John McCain.

A pragmatic plan for U.S. success in Libya must start with resolving some fundamental contradictions in our actions and our words.

President Obama needs to articulate why Libya matters, how we will support the rebellion and how we believe Colonel Qaddafi will exit the scene.

The international community spent three weeks avoiding military action while the rebels were routed, only to now be effectively defending a nearly defeated force. The United Nations resolution authorizes us to stop attacks on civilians, yet the rebels are armed. President Obama says that it is American policy that Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi must go, but the military operations are not aimed at that outcome -- and instead we will employ sanctions to try to achieve it.

The U.S. military is not targeting Colonel Qaddafi in its effort to protect civilians, but he is the individual most responsible for civilian deaths. U.S. officials have said that we are not in the lead, but the U.S. has flown more sorties than any other country. The U.N. placed an arms embargo on both Colonel Qaddafi and the rebels, which has locked in the military's advantage over the opposition. The military strikes began following an Arab League request, but now the Arab League says this is not exactly what they had in mind.

Enumerating these contradictions is not to say that this military operation can't succeed; indeed, there are serious reasons why it must - not least of which is to avoid the perception in the Middle East that the best way for dictators to deal with democratic revolutions is to spill blood. It is to say, however, that President Obama needs to articulate why Libya matters, how we will support the rebellion (or whether we merely wish them well as we bomb around them) and how we believe Colonel Qaddafi will exit the scene.

Outlining a clear plan for U.S. success requires outlining clear objectives for our military actions. This, in turn, requires resolving some of these contradictions -- and soon.

Tribes With Flags

NYT March 22, 2011 By [THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN](#)

David Kirkpatrick, the Cairo bureau chief for The Times, wrote [an article](#) from Libya on Monday that posed *the* key question, not only about Libya but about all the new revolutions brewing in the Arab world: “The question has hovered over the Libyan uprising from the moment the first tank commander defected to join his cousins protesting in the streets of Benghazi: Is the battle for Libya the clash of a brutal dictator against a democratic opposition, or is it fundamentally a tribal civil war?”

This is *the* question because there are two kinds of states in the Middle East: “real countries” with long histories in their territory and strong national identities (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Iran); and those that might be called “tribes with flags,” or more artificial states with boundaries drawn in sharp straight lines by pens of colonial powers that have trapped inside their borders myriad tribes and sects who not only never volunteered to live together but have never fully melded into a unified family of citizens. They are Libya, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. The tribes and sects that make up these more artificial states have long been held together by the iron fist of colonial powers, kings or military dictators. They have no real “citizens” in the modern sense. Democratic rotations in power are impossible because each tribe lives by the motto “rule or die” — either my tribe or sect is in power or we’re dead.

It is no accident that the Mideast democracy rebellions began in three of the real countries — Iran, Egypt and Tunisia — where the populations are modern, with big homogenous majorities that put nation before sect or tribe and have enough mutual trust to come together like a family: “everyone against dad.” But as these revolutions have spread to the more tribal/sectarian societies, it becomes difficult to discern where the quest for democracy stops and the desire that “my tribe take over from your tribe” begins.

In Bahrain, a Sunni minority, 30 percent of the population, rules over a Shiite majority. There are many Bahraini Sunnis and Shiites — so-called sushis, fused by inter-marriage — who carry modern political identities and would accept a true democracy. But there are many other Bahrainis who see life there as a zero-sum sectarian war, including hard-liners in the ruling al-Khalifa family, who have no intention of risking the future of Bahraini Sunnis under majority-Shiite rule. That is why the guns came out there very early. It was rule or die. Iraq teaches what it takes to democratize a big tribalized Arab country once the iron-fisted leader is removed (in that case by us). It takes billions of dollars, 150,000 U.S. soldiers to referee, myriad casualties, a civil war where both sides have to test each other’s power and then a wrenching process, which we midwived, of Iraqi sects and tribes writing their own constitution defining how to live together without an iron fist.

Enabling Iraqis to write their own social contract is the most important thing America did. It was, in fact, the most important liberal experiment in modern Arab history because it showed that even tribes with flags can, possibly, transition through sectarianism into a modern democracy. *But it is still just a hope.* Iraqis still have not given us the definitive answer to their key question: Is Iraq the way Iraq is because Saddam was the way Saddam was or was Saddam the way Saddam was because Iraq is the way Iraq is: a tribalized society? All the other Arab states now hosting rebellions — Yemen, Syria, Bahrain and Libya — are Iraq-like civil-wars-in-waiting. Some may get lucky and their army may play the role of the guiding hand to democracy, but don’t bet on it.

In other words, Libya is just the front-end of a series of moral and strategic dilemmas we are going to face as these Arab uprisings proceed through the tribes with flags. I want to cut President Obama some slack. This is complicated, and I respect the president’s desire to prevent a mass killing in Libya.

But we need to be more cautious. What made the Egyptian democracy movement so powerful was that they owned it. The Egyptian youth suffered hundreds of casualties in their fight for freedom. And we should be doubly cautious of intervening in places that could fall apart in our hands, à la Iraq, especially when we do not know, à la Libya, who the opposition groups really are — democracy movements led by tribes or tribes exploiting the language of democracy?

Finally, sadly, we can’t afford it. We have got to get to work on our own country. If the president is ready to take some big, hard, urgent, decisions, shouldn’t they be first about nation-building in America, not in Libya? Shouldn’t he first be forging a real energy policy that weakens all the Qaddafis and a budget policy that secures the American dream for another generation? Once those are in place, I will follow the president “from the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli.”

22. März 2011, 19:25 Uhr

Nato-Strategie in Libyen

Getrennt bombardieren, gemeinsam streiten

Von [Carsten Volkery](#), London

Zank lähmt das westliche Militärbündnis wie selten zuvor in seiner Geschichte. Seit Tagen debattiert die Nato, wer das Kommando im Libyen-Einsatz übernehmen soll. Jetzt deutet sich offenbar ein Kompromiss an, doch selbst wenn es dazu kommt: Es fehlt die politische Strategie für den Angriff.

[Anders Fogh Rasmussen](#) bemühte sich, gute Miene zum mühsamen Spiel zu machen. Die Nato habe beschlossen, das Waffenembargo gegen Libyen auf See durchzusetzen, sagte der Nato-Generalsekretär nach der jüngsten Sitzung des Rats der Allianz am Dienstag. Auch auf einen "Operationsplan" für das Flugverbot habe man sich geeinigt.

Mit den Ankündigungen wollte der Däne die Handlungsfähigkeit des Bündnisses demonstrieren. Doch war der Auftritt bloß ein Ablenkungsmanöver. Denn in zentralen Fragen kommen die Beteiligten in den Gesprächen nur in kleinen Schritten voran. Darüber, wer das Kommando im [Libyen-Einsatz](#) führen soll, haben die 28 Staaten noch keine Einigung erzielt.

Seit dem Beginn der Operation "Odyssey Dawn" wird debattiert, ob diese nicht am besten unter der Führung der Nato laufen sollte. Die US-Regierung hat keinen Zweifel daran gelassen, dass sie diesmal nicht die Linie bestimmen will. Sie will die Verantwortung in den kommenden Tagen abtreten.

Deutsche Hoffnung auf Kompromiss

In deutschen Regierungskreisen gibt es nach SPIEGEL-ONLINE-Informationen die Hoffnung, dass in den kommenden Tagen eine Einigung erzielt werden kann. Denkbar wäre etwa, dass die Nato die Einsatzführung bei den Patrouillenflügen zur Durchsetzung des Flugverbots übernimmt.

Frankreich schlug am Dienstag jedoch zunächst erneut vor, dass nicht die Nato, sondern ein Gremium unter britisch-französischer Führung die Libyen-Strategie vorgeben solle. Damit, argwöhnen Kritiker, wolle die Grande Nation sich die Kontrolle über die Operation sichern.

Am Abend dann verbreitete das Weiße Haus die Meldung, dass die USA, Frankreich und Großbritannien sich auf eine Führungsrolle der Nato beim Militäreinsatz in Libyen verständigt haben. US-Präsident Barack Obama habe hierzu mit dem französischen Staatschef Nicolas Sarkozy und dem britischen Premierminister David Cameron telefoniert, sagte ein Sprecher Obamas. Man habe sich "auf die Modalitäten zur Nutzung der Strukturen des NATO-Kommandos geeinigt, um die Koalition zu unterstützen", teilte die Regierung in Paris mit.

Möglicherweise ist das der erste Schritt zur Lösung des Dilemmas. Weitere Details wurden allerdings zunächst nicht bekannt. Was das für die anderen Nato-Länder bedeutet, blieb ebenfalls unklar.

Das tagelange Ringen im Nato-Rat erinnert an den ebenso zähen Streit um die Uno-Resolution zum Flugverbot vor gut einer Woche. Es zeigt, wie umstritten der Libyen-Einsatz unter den westlichen Partnern bleibt. Das Hin und Her wirkt auch verheerend nach außen: Es sei "keine gute Voraussetzung für den Erfolg", wenn drei Tage nach Beginn der

Operation immer noch nicht klar sei, wer das Kommando führe, sagte der deutsche Oppositionsführer und Ex-Außenminister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

Bislang gibt es keine einheitliche Kommandostruktur für die Luftangriffe auf Libyen. Zwar werden sie vom Afrika-Hauptquartier der US-Armee in Stuttgart grob koordiniert. Aber die drei Hauptakteure der ersten Tage, die USA, Frankreich und Großbritannien, agieren jeweils in Eigenregie. Die Operation trägt daher in den drei Ländern auch drei verschiedene Namen - in den USA "Odyssee Dawn", in Großbritannien "Ellamy" und in Frankreich "Harmattan".

Italien: Operation ist "anarchisch"

Der Schlagkraft der Allianz scheint das Führungschaos bisher nicht geschadet zu haben. Gaddafis Luftabwehr sei zu über 50 Prozent zerstört, meldet das Pentagon. Eine Reihe von Nato-Staaten weigert sich jedoch, unter diesen Bedingungen in den Kampf zu ziehen. Norwegen und Italien etwa bestehen darauf, dass ihre Flieger nur unter Nato-Befehl aufsteigen. Bislang, zitierte Reuters einen italienischen Regierungsvertreter, verlaufe die Operation "anarchisch".

Frankreich lehnt eine größere Nato-Rolle mit dem Argument ab, der arabischen Liga sei das Banner der Allianz nicht zuzumuten, weil das Bündnis in der Region wegen des Afghanistan-Einsatzes keinen guten Ruf genießt. Das Argument ist nicht von der Hand zu weisen. Die Unterstützung der arabischen Länder ist ohnehin wackelig. Von den beiden arabischen Mitgliedern der Libyen-Koalition hat nur Katar bislang zwei Kampffjets zur Unterstützung der Flugverbotszone geschickt. Die beiden "Mirage" landeten am Dienstag auf dem Souda-Stützpunkt in Kreta. Die Vereinigten Arabischen Emirate hingegen sind noch nicht tätig geworden - und die Nato-Fahne wird ihre Bereitschaft kaum steigern.

Auch US-Präsident Obama scheint die Bedenken der muslimischen Länder besonders ernst zu nehmen: Er telefonierte am Dienstag mit den Staatschefs von Katar und der Türkei. Er weiß, dass die arabische Unterstützung für den Erfolg des Einsatzes vital ist - und an Bedeutung gewinnt, je länger er dauert.

Vordergründiger Streit um Oberkommando

Der Streit um das militärische Oberkommando ist jedoch vordergründig. Selbst wenn die Nato sich in den nächsten Tagen einigen sollte, bleibt das eigentliche Problem ungelöst: Noch immer gibt es keine klare politische Strategie, wo der Einsatz hinführen soll.

Das ursprüngliche militärische Ziel scheint bereits erreicht. Der Fall Bengasis ist vorerst abgewendet, die Regierungstruppen erheblich geschwächt. Ein Großteil von Gaddafis Arsenal ist zerstört, der militärische Vorteil des Diktators gegenüber den Rebellen reduziert. Damit, so ließe sich argumentieren, hat die Koalition den Uno-Auftrag zum Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung erfüllt.

Doch reicht dies den westlichen Regierungschefs nicht. Sowohl die USA wie auch die EU haben offiziell gefordert, dass Gaddafi gehen muss. Direkte Angriffe auf den Diktator wollen sie nicht autorisieren, weil die Uno-Resolution keinen Regimewechsel deckt. Aber sie werden den Einsatz auch kaum abblasen, solange er im Amt ist.

Sie müssen also darauf vertrauen, dass die Rebellen Gaddafi stürzen werden. Daran jedoch sind erhebliche Zweifel angebracht, wie die bisherigen Frontberichte nahelegen. Ausländische Beobachter zeichnen das Bild eines chaotischen Haufens, der teilweise mit dem Taxi an die Front fährt und unter Beschuss sogleich wieder kehrtmacht.

Schon wird das Szenario eines geteilten Landes diskutiert - mit einer dauerhaften internationalen Schutzzone um Bengasi. Das wäre kaum ein zufriedenstellendes Ergebnis des Militäreinsatzes. Wenn die Diskussion um das Oberkommando in einigen Tagen vorbei ist, wird sich daher die Frage mit neuer Dringlichkeit stellen: Was nun

Handfeste Diskussion um Kosten

Der permanente Krisenfonds erfordert anders als bisher Bareinzahlungen. Das hat einen großen Vorteil: Die Diskussion über die Kosten der „Euro-Rettung“ für die deutschen Steuerzahler ist keine Phantomdebatte mehr. Dafür schmerzt die Krisenhilfe nun direkt.

Von Werner Mussler



Nun schmerzt es direkt: Die Beträge für den Euro-Krisenfonds sind nicht mehr virtuell, sondern bar

22. März 2011

Der permanente Euro-Krisenfonds ESM, der 2013 seine Arbeit aufnehmen soll, unterscheidet sich von seinem Vorgänger in einem wesentlichen Punkt: Er erfordert Bareinzahlungen. Deutschland muss knapp 22 Milliarden Euro einlegen.

Dafür sind die „virtuellen“ Beiträge, für die Deutschland bei Forderungsausfällen zusätzlich eintreten müsste, geringer als bisher angenommen – sie betragen „nur“ noch 168 Milliarden Euro.

Diese neue Struktur hat einen großen Vorteil: Die Diskussion über die Kosten der „Euro-Rettung“ für die deutschen Steuerzahler wird handfester. Bislang war das allzu oft eine Phantomdebatte. Anhänger der Krisenhilfe konnten behaupten, diese koste gar kein Geld, es seien ja nur Bürgschaften.

Manche verstiegen sich sogar zur Aussage, die Hilfskredite seien für Deutschland wegen des Zinsgewinns ein gutes Geschäft. Die Gegner konnten den Unterschied von Barzahlungen und Bürgschaften verwischen und äußern, Deutschland müsse einen dreistelligen Milliardenbetrag „zahlen“.

Nun kann niemand mehr behaupten, die Hilfe koste nichts. Die ESM-Bareinlagen erhöhen die deutsche Neuverschuldung. Spätestens jetzt ist die Krisenhilfe nicht mehr virtuell. Sie schmerzt direkt.

Text: F.A.Z.

Die Libyer selbst müssen Gaddafi stürzen

Hinter vorgehaltener Hand wird unter den Alliierten von dem Ziel gesprochen, Gaddafi zu stürzen. Das ist falsch: Die Libyer müssen, nachdem dem Diktator die militärischen Flügel gestutzt worden sind, ihre Revolution selbst zu Ende bringen. Ein Kommentar von *Günther Nonnenmacher*.

22. März 2011

Das militärische Eingreifen der westlichen „Koalition der Willigen“, mit Frankreich an der Spitze, hat den Fall der libyschen Stadt Benghazi und damit ein Massaker von Gaddafis Truppen an deren Bewohnern verhindert. Eine Welle von Luftangriffen hat nach Aussage der Alliierten die Luftabwehr der libyschen Armee weitgehend ausgeschaltet und gewährleistet damit die Durchsetzbarkeit der Flugverbotszone. Es mögen noch weitere Angriffe nötig sein, um das Ziel der UN-Resolution 1973 zu erreichen: den Schutz der libyschen Bevölkerung vor dem eigenen Regime. Doch das Ende der Bombardements ist absehbar. Damit stellt sich dringlich die Frage: Was kommt danach?

Hinter vorgehaltener Hand wird unter den Alliierten von dem Ziel gesprochen, Gaddafi zu stürzen, also einen Regimewechsel einzuleiten. Das ist ein politisch legitimes Ziel, zu dessen Erreichung die Ächtung des Diktators sowie strenge Sanktions- und Embargomaßnahmen beschlossen wurden. Aber es ist kein Ziel, dessen Verfolgung mit militärischen Mitteln von der UN-Resolution vom 17. März gedeckt wäre. Es sollte auch aus anderen Gründen vom Westen nicht militärisch betrieben werden.



© dpa
Aufständischer auf einem erbeuteten Panzer von Gaddafis Streitkräften

In Tunesien und in Ägypten haben Aufständische ihre Herrscher durch Aufkündigung der Loyalität und massenhaften Widerstand vertrieben, aus eigener Kraft, zu der - nach einigem Zögern - die politische Unterstützung der westlichen Welt hinzutrat. Daraus beziehen diese Revolutionen ihre Kraft und ihre Dignität. Es ist immer wieder beteuert worden, dass man diesen Ländern auch wirtschaftlich helfen wolle, jedoch ohne ihnen ein spezifisches Modell der Demokratie von außen aufzudrängen. Niemand wollte noch einmal den Fehler von George W. Bushs „freedom agenda“ begehen, im Mittleren Osten einen Demokratie-Import zu veranstalten, mit allen im Irak und in Afghanistan bis heute sichtbaren Folgelasten, die das dafür erforderliche „nation building“ mit sich bringt. Niemand weiß genau, in welchem Maße die libysche Bevölkerung in Anhänger und Gegner Gaddafis gespalten ist. So hart es klingt: die Libyer müssen, nachdem dem Diktator von außen die militärischen Flügel gestutzt worden sind, ihre Revolution selbst zu Ende bringen. Und sie müssen, mit allen Schwierigkeiten, die damit verbunden sind, selbst entscheiden, wie ihr Land regiert werden soll.

Text: F.A.Z.

'Shame for the Failure of Our Government'

Fischer Joins Criticism of German Security Council Abstention

Former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has blasted his country's government for abstaining from last week's Security Council resolution authorizing military force in Libya. With the move, he says, Germany can forget playing a major role on the global stage.

The notice is still in place on the German Foreign Ministry website. "The reform of the United Nations Security Council remains a major goal for the German government. ... The German government's willingness to shoulder more responsibility within the framework of such reform is unchanged."

"UN reform" is diplo-speak for Berlin's desire to assume a permanent seat on the Security Council, a goal that Chancellor Angela Merkel has long been striving for. An alternative to that target would be a permanent European Union seat. But following Germany's abstention from the Council resolution passed last Friday, which authorized military operations to thwart attacks by forces loyal to Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi on civilians, [an increasing number](#) of foreign policy heavyweights in Germany are saying that the goal is now unachievable.

"Germany has lost its credibility in the United Nations and in the Middle East," wrote former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer in a contribution to the Tuesday edition of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. "German hopes for a permanent seat on the Security Council have been permanently dashed and one is now fearful of Europe's future."

Klaus Naumann, formerly the general inspector of the Bundeswehr -- the highest ranking position in the German military -- was, if anything, even harsher in his assessment. "Germany's hopes for a permanent Security Council seat can be buried. Even the idea of an EU seat is damaged," he wrote in a piece for the business daily *Handelsblatt*. "Germany has turned the idea of a unified European Union foreign policy into a farce."

'We Calculated the Risk'

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle has done his best to defend his country's abstention on resolution 1971. Initially, he said that the non-vote stemmed from fears in Berlin of becoming involved in the conflict. More recently, he has pointed to a debate within the Arab League about the Western military force currently being brought to bear in Libya.

"We calculated the risk," Westerwelle told reporters in Brussels on Monday ahead of a meeting of EU foreign ministers. "If we see that three days after this intervention began, the Arab League already criticizes it, I think we had good reasons."

Critics of Westerwelle's position have found neither explanation to be particularly convincing. On the one hand, a vote in favor of military action in Libya would not have made German involvement obligatory. On the other, prior to the vote, the Arab League had been among those calling for a no-fly zone in Libya. Many have said that, with crucial state votes looming on Sunday in Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate, domestic political concerns are to blame for Berlin's unwillingness to support the resolution.

Germany's abstention made it the only Western country on the Security Council not to approve military action against Libya -- all the more surprising given Westerwelle's repeated assertions prior to ([and also subsequent to](#)) the vote that Gadhafi had to go. Also abstaining were China, Russia, Brazil and India.

In his essay, Fischer argued the abstentions by China and Russia, because they possess permanent vetoes, were essentially "yes" votes -- whereas that from Germany, as a leading member of both NATO and the European Union, was akin to a "no" vote. "I don't know what the German foreign minister was thinking," he wrote. "But (the abstention) doesn't have much in common with a values-driven foreign policy nor with German and European Union interests."

Images of the Warsaw Ghetto

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, a long-time member of the Green Party and now a member of the European Parliament, is likewise concerned about Germany's apparent reluctance to vigorously defend Western values.

"Why is it so difficult for us in Germany to realize that we have to help the rebels in Libya, primarily because a bloodbath is looming in Benghazi?" Cohn-Bendit, who is a dual citizen of France and Germany and currently holds a French seat in the parliament, said in an interview with SPIEGEL ONLINE. "Everyone has seen pictures of the Warsaw ghetto. Everyone knows what happens when an army takes over a city. That's why all parties in France, including on the left, were in favor of a military intervention in Libya. In Germany, that didn't happen."

Of particular concern for many critics is the fact that Westerwelle has largely isolated his country from its closest allies. Ever since World War II, Germany has sought to surround itself with allies, preferring to be a member of a larger club than to going it alone. Indeed, it has been this foreign policy philosophy which has made Germany a leading proponent of European integration and a driver behind the goal of a unified EU foreign policy.

Shame

"The opposition to our closest partner France is a break with all constants of German foreign policy since 1949," Naumann wrote. "It is the legacy of Adenauer and Kohl -- all of Germany's chancellors in fact -- that Germany can never again be isolated. And now it is supposed to be in Germany's interest to throw that all over board and risk going it alone because of the vague risk of becoming involved in a war in Africa?"

The results of the break with France have already become clear. At Monday's meeting of European Union top diplomats, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe reportedly did not take kindly to Westerwelle's tacit backing of the Arab League's criticism of ongoing Western air raids in Libya. When questioned about the tiff, Juppe merely said "I say what I think and so does Westerwelle."

And so too does Fischer. "I have nothing but shame for the failure of our government," he wrote.

cgh

La déclaration de Nicolas Sarkozy à l'issue du sommet international sur la Libye à Paris (Site de l'Elysée, 19/3)

<http://www.elysee.fr/president/mediatheque/videos/2011/mars/declaration-lors-du-sommet-de-paris-pour-le.10950.html?search=&xtmc=&xcr=&offset=0&context=null>

Lisez attentivement le discours du chef d'Etat français, repérez le vocabulaire intéressant, entraînez-vous à la prononciation et, surtout, prenez position par rapport à ce qui est dit :

«Aujourd'hui se sont réunis à Paris, sous la présidence conjointe de la France et du secrétaire général des Nations unies, les dirigeants de la ligue des Etats arabes et de l'Union européenne ainsi que les représentants des Etats-Unis et du Canada. Ensemble nous avons décidé d'assurer l'application de la résolution du Conseil de sécurité exigeant un cessez-le-feu immédiat et l'arrêt des violences contre les populations civiles en Libye.

Les participants sont convenus de mettre en œuvre tous les moyens nécessaires, en particulier militaires, pour faire respecter les décisions du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies.

C'est pourquoi en accord avec nos partenaires, nos forces aériennes s'opposeront à toute agression des avions du colonel Kadhafi contre la population de Benghazi. D'ores et déjà nos avions empêchent les attaques aériennes sur la ville.

D'ores et déjà d'autres avions, français, sont prêts à intervenir contre des blindés qui menaceraient des civils désarmés. Dès hier, la France, le Royaume-Uni, les Etats-Unis et les pays arabes ont adressé au colonel Kadhafi et aux forces qu'il emploie l'avertissement suivant: en l'absence d'un cessez-le-feu immédiat et d'un retrait des forces qui ont attaqué les populations civiles au cours des dernières semaines nos pays auront recours à des moyens militaires.

Cet avertissement a été repris par tous les participants au sommet qui vient de s'achever. Le colonel Kadhafi a méprisé cet avertissement. Au cours des dernières heures, ses forces ont intensifié leurs offensives meurtrières.

Des peuples arabes ont choisi de se libérer de la servitude dans laquelle ils se sentaient depuis trop longtemps enfermés. Ces révolutions ont fait naître une immense espérance dans le cœur de tous ceux qui partagent les valeurs de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme. Mais elles ne sont pas sans risques. L'avenir de ces peuples arabes leur appartient. Au milieu des difficultés et des épreuves de toutes sortes qu'ils ont à affronter ces peuples arabes ont besoin de notre aide et de notre soutien. C'est notre devoir.

En Libye, une population civile pacifique qui ne réclame rien d'autre que le droit de choisir elle-même son destin se trouve en danger de mort. Nous avons le devoir de répondre à son appel angoissé. L'avenir de la Libye appartient aux Libyens. Nous ne voulons pas décider à leur place. Le combat qu'ils mènent pour leur liberté est le leur. Si nous intervenons aux côtés des pays arabes ce n'est pas au nom d'une finalité que nous chercherions à imposer au peuple libyen mais au nom de la conscience universelle qui ne peut tolérer de tels crimes.

Aujourd'hui nous intervenons en Libye sur mandat du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU avec nos partenaires et notamment nos partenaires arabes. Nous le faisons pour protéger la population civile de la folie meurtrière d'un régime qui en assassinant son propre peuple a perdu toute légitimité. Nous intervenons pour permettre au peuple libyen de choisir lui-même son destin. Il ne saurait être privé de ses droits par la violence et par la terreur.

Il est encore temps pour le colonel Kadhafi d'éviter le pire en se conformant sans délai et sans réserve à toutes les exigences de la communauté internationale. La porte de la diplomatie se rouvrira au moment où les agressions cesseront. Notre détermination est totale, je le dis avec solennité, chacun se trouve désormais placé devant ses responsabilités. C'est une décision grave que nous avons été amenés à prendre. Aux côtés de ses partenaires arabes, européens, nord-américains, la France est décidée à assumer son rôle, son rôle devant l'Histoire. Je vous remercie».

Europe's Rift Over Energy Is Widened by France

By [JAMES KANTER](#)

BRUSSELS — The French energy minister on Tuesday strongly defended the use of [nuclear energy](#), highlighting a widening rift in Europe over the future of the technology since the crisis at reactors in Japan.

The energy minister, [Éric Besson](#), said it was his “profound conviction that nuclear energy will stay in Europe and the world one of the core energies in the 21st century.” He was speaking in Brussels after a meeting of [European Union](#) energy ministers to discuss the safety of the 143 reactors across the Union’s 27 member states.

The ministers agreed that safety checks would remain voluntary, but did not agree on how to structure tests for reactors of such varied designs and in such different locations. They said that the stress tests would be discussed at a meeting of E.U. heads of government this week and that the tests should be done before year’s end.

A renewed push to limit nuclear energy has been led by Germany, which still gets about a quarter of its energy from nuclear, and Austria, which banned nuclear energy in the late 1970s.

France and Britain have defended the technology to ensure that they can supply enough electricity without depending on imports of fossil fuels while decreasing emissions of greenhouse gases.

France relies on nuclear power for about 80 percent of its electricity and is a major exporter of nuclear technology. Britain generates only around 18 percent of its electricity from nuclear.

Last week, the German authorities ordered operations at the seven oldest reactors in the country to be halted for three months for safety checks.

Mr. Besson said Monday that shutting down reactors on the basis of age was not suitable for France because other risks — like flooding — based on the location of a plant would probably be more significant issues. He also said he was among the ministers who had criticized [Günther Oettinger](#), the E.U. energy commissioner, for warning of an imminent catastrophe in Japan last week.

Other ministers said Monday that they were as concerned about checking the safety of reactors in nearby countries like Russia and Switzerland as about reactors inside the Union, said E.U. diplomats who spoke after the closed-door meeting on the condition of anonymity.

[Greenpeace](#), the environmental group, said Monday that about half of the 143 reactors in the European Union were of “particular concern” for safety. They include Forsmark-1 in Sweden, where backup generators malfunctioned during a power failure in 2006; Blayais in France, where flooding knocked out some safety equipment in 1999; and Santa María de Garoña, which is in Spain and is a boiling water reactor like one used at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, in Japan, said [Jan Haverkamp](#) at Greenpeace.

The list of reactors prepared by Greenpeace also includes 12 Russian-designed reactors in Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic that lack a second containment structure that could help to prevent the escape of radiation in the event of an accident or terrorist attack, said Mr. Haverkamp.

Europas neue Risse

Der Zank über Libyen lähmt in Brüssel die EU und die Nato. Durch die beiden großen Organisationen ziehen sich andere Risse, als man es zuletzt gewohnt war. Der Nato-Generalsekretär ärgert sich über die Bremser aus Berlin - und über die forschen Franzosen.

Von *Nikolas Busse, Brüssel*



Die Bremser aus Berlin - hier Außenminister Westerwelle - ärgern den Nato-Generalsekretär Rasmussen

22. März 2011

In die Höhle des Löwen hat sich Guido Westerwelle dann doch getraut. Eigentlich war angekündigt, dass Staatsminister Hoyer die Bundesregierung am Montag auf einer Sitzung des EU-Außenrates vertreten würde. Man hätte die Abwesenheit des deutschen Ministers sogar gut mit der Nachlese zur Landtagswahl in Sachsen-Anhalt begründen können, die am selben Tag in Berlin stattfand. Am Montagmorgen aber tauchte Westerwelle selbst vor dem Brüsseler Ratsgebäude auf.

Schon seine ersten Äußerungen machten deutlich, dass er sich entschlossen hatte, die deutsche Nichtteilnahme am Libyen-Einsatz vor den Partnern offensiv zu vertreten. „Ich kann als deutscher Außenminister nicht deutsche Soldaten nach Libyen schicken, weil es andere tun“, sagte er. Die kritische Stellungnahme der Arabischen Liga schon am dritten Kriegstag zeige doch, dass die deutsche Skepsis berechtigt gewesen sei. Und überhaupt, es gebe viele andere EU-Länder, die dem Krieg ebenfalls fernblieben.

Tatsächlich ist Deutschland in der EU und in der Nato nicht isoliert. Durch die beiden großen Organisationen des Westens, die sich gerade in Fragen von Krieg und Frieden häufiger streiten als enig sind, ziehen sich diesmal allerdings andere Risse, als man es zuletzt gewohnt war. Eine häufige Brüsseler Lagerbildung der vergangenen Jahre lautete: Angelsachsen und Osteuropa gegen Teile Westeuropas unter deutsch-französischer Führung. Diese Konstellation kam immer wieder dadurch zustande, dass die Osteuropäer aus Angst vor Russland die Anlehnung an die Vereinigten Staaten suchten, selbst um den Preis, dafür am Irakkrieg teilnehmen zu müssen. In Deutschland und Frankreich suchte man dagegen den Ausgleich mit Moskau und hatte – hier aus Pazifismus, dort aus machtpolitischen Erwägungen – kein Interesse an der militärisch unterfütterten Freiheitsagenda des früheren amerikanischen Präsidenten Bush.

Im Fall von Libyen dagegen steht Deutschland mit Osteuropa gegen den alten westlichen Kern der Nato. An dem Einsatz gegen Gaddafis Truppen nehmen neben den drängenden Franzosen und Briten sowie den eher widerstrebenden Amerikanern vor allem Länder teil, die durch ihre Nähe zum Krisenherd berührt sind (Italien, Spanien) oder sich traditionell als Transatlantiker verstehen (Dänemark, Norwegen). Auf der Teilnehmerliste stehen sogar Staaten wie Kanada und (derzeit noch auf eine Nato-Anfrage wartend) die Niederlande, die gerade erst ihren Kampfeinsatz in Afghanistan aufgeben mussten, weil er zu Hause nicht mehr durchzusetzen war.

Dagegen fällt das Fernbleiben der Osteuropäer ins Auge, das allen voran der polnische Ministerpräsident Tusk deutlich machte, als er am Samstag das Libyentreffen des französischen Präsidenten Sarkozy in Paris besuchte. Polen werde humanitäre Hilfe leisten, aber keine Soldaten schicken, sagte Tusk. Das entspricht ziemlich genau der deutschen Linie. Auch die tschechische, rumänische und bulgarische Regierung haben gesagt, dass sie nicht teilnehmen wollen.

Ernüchterung über Erfahrungen mit Amerika

Bei allen Osteuropäern scheint da eine gewisse Ernüchterung über die Erfahrungen mit Amerika eine Rolle zu spielen, bei den Bulgaren außerdem eine böse Erinnerung an den Fall der Krankenschwestern, die jahrelang in Libyen festgesetzt waren. „Alle hatten Mitleid mit uns, wussten, dass sie unschuldig sind, doch das half uns nichts“, sagte dieser Tage Ministerpräsident Borissow. Schließlich kann die Bundesregierung noch auf die Zurückhaltung der Türkei verweisen, die als großes islamisches Nato-Land bei einer Intervention in einem arabischen Land besonders empfindlich ist.

Diese Interessengegensätze führten in den Brüsseler Sitzungen der vergangenen Tage zu einigem Zank. Bei den EU-Außenministern gerieten die beiden Länder des früheren Integrationsmotors aneinander, weil der Franzose Juppé offenbar mit der Marschorder nach Brüssel

gekommen war, eine öffentliche Erklärung auszuhandeln, in der die EU den Koalitionseinsatz über Libyen mit „starker Sprache“ unterstützt, wie man unter Diplomaten sagt. Davon wollte aber Westerwelle nichts wissen, der sich allenfalls mit Ausdrücken anfreunden konnte, wie sie die G 8 in der Woche zuvor in Paris gefunden hatte. Als Kompromiss heißt es nun in den Schlussfolgerungen, die EU sei „zufrieden“ mit der Libyen-Resolution des UN-Sicherheitsrats und gewillt, „entschlossen“ zu handeln, um die Resolution durchzusetzen, wozu allerdings jeder „in unterschiedlicher Weise“ beitrage.

Die Deutschen wollten das Militärische der Nato überlassen

Hinter diesem Ringen um Worte verbargen sich auch handfeste operationelle Fragen. Die Franzosen wollten zu der Zeit noch, dass die EU das UN-Waffenembargo gegen Libyen überwacht, nicht etwa die Nato, obwohl die dazu schon einen Operationsplan erstellt hatte. Das aber ging den Deutschen zu weit, denn die möchten die EU in der Libyen-Sache eben mit humanitären Aufgaben betraut sehen und alles Militärische der Nato überlassen. Es schien, als habe die Bundesregierung die Sorge, dass die EU über die Hintertür in den Konflikt hineingezogen wird.

Immerhin wurde beschlossen, dass die Außenbeauftragte Ashton Planungen für eine mögliche Militärmission der EU vornehmen soll, und zwar zur weiteren Beratung Ende der Woche. Da ist in Brüssel ein EU-Gipfel angesetzt. Der Auswärtige Dienst der EU hatte vor einiger Zeit auch die Idee in die Brüsseler Welt gesetzt, man könne militärische Schneisen in das Land schlagen, um humanitäre Hilfe zu leisten. Dafür würde es nach Einschätzung von Diplomaten aber wohl kaum Zustimmung aus Berlin geben.

Sarkozy wollte seine Führungsrolle sichern

Kaum harmonischer ging es am anderen Ende der Stadt zu, wo die Nato ihr Hauptquartier hat. Die Franzosen, die erst vor kurzem in die militärische Kommandostruktur des Bündnisses zurückgekehrt sind, blockierten am Wochenende zunächst eine Übernahme des Einsatzes durch die Nato. Begründet wurde das mit den (tatsächlich bestehenden) Vorbehalten der islamischen Welt gegen das Bündnis. Viele Diplomaten vermuteten allerdings, dass Sarkozy seine Führungsrolle nicht in den Schatten gestellt sehen wollte. Auch die Türkei hatte Einwände, aber die führten manche darauf zurück, dass Ministerpräsident Erdogan nicht zum Pariser Libyengipfel am Samstag geladen war. Amerikaner und Briten waren dagegen für eine Einbindung der Nato; Präsident Obama sah sich inzwischen sogar genötigt, das öffentlich deutlich zu machen.

Nach immer neuen Verhandlungen der Nato-Botschafter, die teilweise bis spät in die Nacht dauerten, versuchte Generalsekretär Rasmussen es am Montag mit der Brechstange. Im Nato-Rat beschuldigte er Frankreich und die Türkei, aber auch Deutschland, die Arbeit des Bündnisses aufzuhalten. Das führte dazu, dass der deutsche und der französische Vertreter unter Protest den Raum verließen. Die Deutschen dürfte der Vorgang schon alleine deswegen geärgert haben, weil sie offensichtlich nicht die Absicht haben, die Beschlüsse der Nato zu blockieren. Rasmussen, der sich als „CEO“ der Nato versteht, hatte bereits in den Wochen zuvor den Eindruck erweckt, dass er das Bündnis unbedingt an einem etwaigen Einsatz beteiligen will.

Als sich die Gemüter am nächsten Tag beruhigt hatten, verständigte man sich fürs erste darauf, der Allianz die Überwachung des Waffenembargos zur See zu übertragen. Die große Frage, wer beim eigentlichen Libyen-Einsatz den Hut des Oberbefehlshabers trägt, blieb damit zunächst unbeantwortet. Nur der Operationsplan für die Flugverbotszone wurde am Dienstag verabschiedet. Manche in der Nato fragten sich freilich, wo eigentlich noch der Mehrwert des Bündnisses liege, da die Koalition der Willigen die Zone schon weitgehend durchgesetzt habe.

Text: F.A.Z.

Attacks on Libya: Stabilisation of sorts

The Economist Mar 22nd 2011, 13:00 by The Economist online



AFTER a third day of sorties by the international coalition that is imposing a no-fly zone on Libya, the situation on the ground appears to have stabilised. Rebel irregulars (pictured) have advanced to the outskirts of Ajdabiya, 150km south of their stronghold in Benghazi, the main city in eastern Libya. Despite the attrition of their heavy weaponry by air attacks, loyalists to the regime of Muammar Qaddafi continue to hold this important road junction, blocking the poorly armed and ill-disciplined rebels' advance to the west.

While effective at wiping out Mr Qaddafi's air defences, the coalition strikes do not yet appear to have blunted his efforts to recapture two pockets of rebel control in the west of the country. Misurata, Libya's third-largest city, remains under siege, with power and water cut. Intermittent rocket fire and raids into the city centre by loyalist tank columns killed as many as 40 people on Monday, according to local sources, but failed to dislodge rebel gunmen. Zintan, a small town in the mountainous Jebel Nafusa region south-west of the capital, Tripoli, also continues to be hit by sporadic shelling. Many inhabitants are said to have taken refuge in surrounding caves.

General Carter Ham, who heads American forces in the Libyan operation, says that the frequency of air attacks is likely to diminish, now that their primary objective of securing total command of the skies has been achieved. This suggests that in the next phase progress will be slower, depending more on the rebel opposition's ability to mobilise and project force over Libya's vast distances, and on the coalition's ability to degrade Mr Qaddafi's ground forces. It is difficult for the aerial coalition to co-ordinate tactically with rebel groups, and its security-council mandate is to protect civilians rather than to assist in overthrowing Mr Qaddafi. Aside from some minor strains inside the allied command, the coalition faces mounting diplomatic opposition, with countries such as Russia, Brazil and China all querying whether the operation has already gone too far.

France Takes Lead In Coalition Strikes Against Libya

NPR Radio, March 19, 2011

France was one of the most strident countries against the invasion of Iraq so it's unusual to see that country taking the lead in the strike against Libya, according to NPR's Eleanor Beardsley. Still, the French seem to be proud of how diplomatically Nicholas Sarkozy has handled the effort. The French president has said that, there are some risks, but they are calculated and there is great moral authority to go in and protect people.

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GUY RAZ, host:

And as we said, French warplanes had been taking the lead in this military campaign. President Nicholas Sarkozy spoke in Paris earlier today.

President NICHOLAS SARKOZY (France): (Through translator) As of now, our aircraft are preventing planes from attacking the town. As of now, other French aircraft are ready to intervene against tanks, armored vehicles threatening unarmed civilians.

RAZ: That's French President Nicholas Sarkozy today speaking through an interpreter, of course.

Eleanor Beardsley is covering the story for us from Paris.

And, Eleanor, are you there?

ELEANOR BEARDSLEY: I am, Guy.

RAZ: This seems to be a different kind of role for the French taking the lead in an international military campaign, at least it appears to be at the moment.

BEARDSLEY: Yeah, that's right. You know, everyone remembers that France was one of the most strident countries against the Iraq War, you know, really campaigned against the invasion of Iraq. So it is kind of different to see them taking the lead role in the, well, it's not the invasion of Libya, but the no-fly zone enforcement over Libya.

But there seems to be - I mean, the way people are speaking, there seems to be a great pride in that. I mean, I hear people who usually don't have much good to say about Sarkozy saying how proud - they don't say proud, but they seem to be, yeah, proud of how he's diplomatically brought it together, pursue the no-fly zone. And, you know, there are - this could be a quagmire, the whole thing. I mean, who knows how it's going to end.

But right now, that doesn't seem to be the talk here. There's a lot of talk about outrage, and, you know, moral authority, and citizens being massacred. So, I mean, from Sarkozy who talks about it to the foreign minister who went on television and denied it, and they said, you know, he said, yes, there are some risks, but they're calculated, you know?

And so the French mindset at this point seems to be that, you know, obviously, the military is far superior, nothing to talk about even. But there seems to be this feeling that the risks are calculated, and they're just great moral authority to go in and protect people. And so no one has really delved into how it could go wrong yet.

RAZ: Eleanor, initially, as I mentioned, it was the French President Sarkozy who announced this campaign and announced that French planes were in the skies over Benghazi. Now, we have reports, of course, that U.S. and British warships are involved as well.

Earlier in the day, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was in Paris for a meeting - European, U.S. and Arab leaders - to talk about the crisis there. What did Secretary Clinton have to say?

BEARDSLEY: Well, she spoke - you know, it's funny because I'm covering this and there are so many things going on everywhere. I didn't hear all of her talk. But, you know, she spoke also of the moral outrage and how there was an obligation to help the people of Libya. And she spoke strongly also about the coalition. There's a lot of emphasis on, you know, everyone coming together this time. There's not, you know, the discord there was over the Iraq invasion.

But she did also say that the U.S. would absolutely not have troops on the ground. So, you know, you have this feeling that the U.S. was going to play this supporting role. So, yeah - but it was always known that there was the fleet in the Mediterranean and that they would fire against air defenses on the coast around Tripoli. So we knew the U.S. would fire.

But it seemed to come as a surprise that it came so quickly after the French, because everyone was thinking the U.S. was really, you know, taking a quiet supportive role. But I think that that was always known.

I spoke with a defense expert. He said, yeah, I mean, even if the U.S. didn't plan to initially fly, you know, fighter jets, F-18s, over Libya, they weren't going to always, you know, use the air fleet in the Mediterranean to attack air bases on the coast around Tripoli.

RAZ: That's Eleanor Beardsley reporting from Paris for us on the situation in Libya and France's involvement. We'll be hearing more from her in the coming hours and days.

Eleanor, thank you so much.

BEARDSLEY: Thank you, Guy.

Die Militärintervention gegen Gaddafi ist illegitim

Ob man Diktatoren zum Teufel jagen soll, ist die eine Frage - selbstverständlich soll man das, so gut es geht. Man muss sich aber auch dem trostlosen Befund aussetzen: Die Intervention der Alliierten in Libyen steht auf brüchigem normativem Boden.

Von Reinhard Merkel
22. März 2011

Die Resolution 1973 des UN-Sicherheitsrats vom 17. März, die den Weg zur militärischen Intervention in Libyen freigab, und Maß und Ziel dieser Intervention selbst überschreiten die Grenzen des Rechts. Nicht einfach nur die Grenzen positiver Normen – das geschieht im Völkerrecht oft und gehört zum Motor seiner Entwicklung. Sondern die seiner Fundamente: der Prinzipien, auf denen jedes Recht zwischen den Staaten beruht. Die Entscheidung der Bundesregierung, der Resolution nicht zuzustimmen, war richtig. Die empörte Kritik daran ist so kurzsichtig und fahrlässig wie die Entscheidung des Sicherheitsrats und die Art der Intervention selbst: kurzsichtig im Ausblenden wesentlicher Voraussetzungen der Situation in Libyen, fahrlässig im Hinblick auf die Folgen dieses Kriegs für die Normenordnung der Welt.

Strenger als es der Sicherheitsrat getan hat, müssen zwei denkbare Ziele der Intervention unterschieden werden: die Verhinderung schwerer völkerrechtlicher Verbrechen und die gewaltsame Parteinahme zur Entscheidung eines Bürgerkriegs. Beides unterliegt höchst unterschiedlichen Möglichkeiten der Rechtfertigung. An eine dritte Unterscheidung sei vorsichtshalber erinnert: Ob man Gewalttaten unterbinden oder Diktatoren zum Teufel jagen soll, ist die eine Frage – selbstverständlich soll man das, so gut es geht. Eine ganz andere ist es aber, ob man zu diesem Zweck einen Krieg führen darf, dessen Folgen politisch wie normativ schwer abzusehen sind.



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Aufständischer auf einem erbeuteten Panzer von Gaddafis Streitkräften

Das Ziel, einen Tyrannen zu stürzen und bewaffneten Aufständischen dabei zu helfen, ist kein legitimer Titel zur gewaltsamen Intervention dritter Staaten. Die Gründe dafür sind nicht bloß solche des positiven Völkerrechts, wiewohl sie sich dort zahlreich finden, etwa in Artikel 3 des Zweiten Zusatzprotokolls zu den Genfer Konventionen von 1977 oder in der Entscheidung des Internationalen Gerichtshofs im Streitfall „Nicaragua v. U.S.A.“ von 1986. Diese Normen statuieren ein striktes Verbot des militärischen Eingreifens in Bürgerkriege auf fremdem Territorium. Wer will, mag mit der gängigen Nonchalance mächtiger Staaten im Umgang mit dem Völkerrecht darüber hinwegsehen. Aber als Ordnung des Rechts ist die zwischenstaatliche Ordnung mehr als der bloße Modus vivendi einer unregulierten Machtpolitik.

Der demokratische Interventionismus ist eine Missgeburt

Schon Kant hat in seiner Schrift „Zum ewigen Frieden“ von 1796 festgehalten, die Intervention äußerer Mächte in einen unentschiedenen Bürgerkrieg sei „eine Verletzung der Rechte eines nur mit seiner inneren Krankheit ringenden, von keinem andern abhängigen Volks“, ein „Skandal“, der „die Autonomie aller Staaten unsicher“ mache. Dieser Satz bezeichnet das normative Grundproblem aller Interventionen in fremden Bürgerkriegen richtig. Solange die innere Auseinandersetzung andauert, verdrängt die konfliktentscheidende Parteinahme von außen für eine der kämpfenden Seiten die andere gewaltsam aus ihrer legitimen Rolle als Mitkonstituent der künftigen innerstaatlichen Verfasstheit.

Ja, auch der interne Sieg einer der Parteien kann dies bewirken, so wie es durch das Regime eines Despoten vom Schlage Gaddafis schon zuvor dem größten Teil des Volkes aufgezwungen worden sein mag. Aber Kant hat recht mit dem Hinweis, das bezeichne ein Ringen des Volkes mit seiner „inneren Krankheit“, verletze jedoch dessen Autonomie gegenüber anderen Völkern nicht. Das tut erst die gewaltsame Entscheidung des Konflikts durch externe Dritte. Und genau deshalb bedroht sie die Grundnorm des Rechtsverhältnisses aller Staaten: deren Gleichheit und Autonomie.

Ganz gewiss: Gaddafi ist ein Schurke, dessen Entfernung von der Macht ein Segen wäre, nicht nur für Libyen. Aber die Annahme, die ihn bekämpfenden Rebellen seien eine Demokratiebewegung mit homogenen freiheitlichen Zielen, ist lebensblind. Niemand durchschaut das dunkle Gemisch politisch-ideologischer Orientierungen unter den Rebellen derzeit auch nur annähernd. Was man dagegen sehr genau kennt, und nicht erst seit 2003, sind die Schwierigkeiten eines demokratischen State-Building ohne historisches Fundament und nach einem extern erzwungenen Regimewechsel. Sollte man nicht meinen, die führenden Politiker der westlichen Welt hätten inzwischen gelernt, was schon Kant gesehen hat? Die wichtigste Ressource eines solchen State-Building, die prinzipielle Loyalität der großen Mehrheit eines Volkes, dürfte durch den gewaltsamen Eingriff von außen weit nachhaltiger zerstört als durch die Entmachtung eines Despoten gewährleistet werden.

Was das für Libyens politische Zukunft heißt, mögen die Experten für die arabische Welt ermessen. Was es aber normativ heißt, liegt auf der Hand: Ein Ziel, das nicht oder doch nicht in akzeptabler Weise erreichbar ist, taugt als legitimierender Grund von vornherein nicht. Der demokratische Interventionismus, propagiert 2003, als sich die irakischen Massenvernichtungswaffen als Lüge erwiesen, und jetzt in der euphemistischen Maske einer Pflicht zur kriegerischen Hilfe im Freiheitskampf wieder erstanden, ist politisch, ethisch und völkerrechtlich eine Missgeburt.

Dass Gaddafi keinen Völkermord begonnen hat, ist evident

Man wird einwenden, das alles laufe an Sinn und Ziel der Intervention vorbei. Das Mandat des Sicherheitsrats decke allein die zum Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung erforderlichen Gewaltmittel, und nur diese würden zu nichts anderem als jenem Schutzzweck auch eingesetzt. Das ist zwar de facto nicht wahr und im klaren Bewusstsein aller Beteiligten von Anfang an nichts anderes gewesen als eine rhetorische Geste an die Adresse des Völkerrechts. Sofort nach Beginn der Kriegshandlungen hat man in England und Amerika verdeutlicht, ohne den Sturz Gaddafis sei die Situation nicht zu bereinigen. Hätten die Verfasser der Resolution deren humanitäre Begrenzung ernst gemeint, dann hätten sie die drohende Nötigung, mit der Gewalt aufzuhören, deutlich an beide Seiten richten müssen. Das haben sie nicht. Es ist aber ein normatives Unding, zur Befriedung eines militärischen Konflikts die Machtmittel der einen Seite auszuschalten, um denen der anderen zur freien Wirkung zu verhelfen. Nur so freilich lässt sich der Sturz Gaddafis erreichen. Und eben darum geht es.

Nun also: Darf man zum Schutz der Zivilbevölkerung eines anderen Staates gegen diesen Staat Krieg führen? Ja, in Extremfällen darf man das – wenn sich nur so ein Völkermord oder systematische Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit verhindern lassen, wie sie Artikel 7 des Statuts des Internationalen Strafgerichtshofs beschreibt. Das hat die Entwicklung des Völkerrechts in den vergangenen zwei Jahrzehnten klargelegt. Gestritten wird zwar, ob eine solche Intervention auch ohne Mandat des Sicherheitsrats legitim sein kann. Aber für die gegenwärtige ist das belanglos.

Dass Gaddafi keinen Völkermord begonnen oder beabsichtigt hat, ist evident. Ein Völkermord setzt hinter allen dabei begangenen Taten das Ziel voraus, „eine nationale, rassische, religiöse oder ethnische Gruppe als solche“ zu zerstören. Nichts spricht dafür, dass die offensichtliche Intention Gaddafis, einen Aufstand – mit welcher Brutalität immer – niederzuschlagen, von diesem für ihn sinnlosen Motiv begleitet wäre.

Kollaterale Opfer unter Zivilisten ändern daran nichts

Haben Gaddafis Truppen systematisch Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit begangen oder doch als bevorstehend befürchten lassen? Die Antwort lautet beide Male: nein. Hier vor allem darf man sich den Blick nicht vom Nebel irreführender Phrasen trüben lassen. Wer aus noch so berechtigter Empörung über die Brutalität militärischer Gewalt ihr mit dem Siegel „Völkermord“ oder „Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit“ die Affinität zu deren Urbildern bescheinigt: den Massenmorden der Nationalsozialisten, sollte bedenken, was das bedeutet: den Zugriff auf die fundamentalen Normen der Weltordnung. Denn solche Verbrechen erlauben den Krieg, das dritte der schwersten Menschheitsübel und ihrer trostlosen Geschichte. Wer so fahrlässig wie die Regierungen der Intervenienten, viele westliche Medien und leider auch die Resolution des Sicherheitsrates mit solchen Zuschreibungen umgeht, tastet die Grundnorm des Völkerrechts und damit dieses selbst an: das Gewaltverbot zwischen den Staaten.

„Der Diktator führt Krieg gegen sein eigenes Volk, bombardiert systematisch seine eigene Bevölkerung, massakriert die Zivilbevölkerung seines Landes“ - ja, das alles, in den vergangenen Tagen tausendfach wiederholt, wären Beispiele für gravierende Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit. Aber Gaddafi führt Krieg gegen bewaffnete Rebellen, die ihrerseits Krieg gegen ihn führen. Kämpfende Aufständische, und wären sie Stunden zuvor noch Bäcker, Schuster und Lehrer gewesen, sind keine Zivilisten. Dass Gaddafis Truppen gezielt Zivilisten töteten, ist vielfach behauptet, aber nirgends glaubhaft belegt worden. Und jeder nach außen legitimierte, also autonome Staat der Welt, darf - in

bestimmten Grenzen - bewaffnete innere Aufstände zunächst einmal bekämpfen. Bevor man diese Feststellungen nun mit dem Zwischenruf abschneidet: „Aber hier ein Tyrann, durch nichts legitimiert, dort Kämpfer für ihre Freiheit und Menschenrechte!“, sollte man sich die Redlichkeitspflicht zumuten, einen Sachverhalt zunächst vollständig zu betrachten und ihn erst dann zu beurteilen.

Nach Kriterien, die sich inzwischen auch im Völkerrecht durchsetzen, war Gaddafis Despotenregime nach innen, der eigenen Bevölkerung gegenüber, niemals legitim. Davon zu unterscheiden ist seine Legitimität nach außen gegenüber allen anderen Staaten der internationalen Gemeinschaft. Und diese Legitimität ist freilich unbestreitbar - die wirksame, international anerkannte Funktion eines für sein Land handelnden, Verträge schließenden, die Mitgliedschaft in den Vereinten Nationen repräsentierenden und andere Rollen ausübenden Machthabers. Diese externe Legitimität gegenüber der Völkergemeinschaft verliert ein Regime und mit ihm der Staat selber erst dann, wenn es die Grundpflichten jedes Staates, die seine Existenz als zwangsrechtliche Ordnung allererst legitimieren, missachtet, ja in ihr Gegenteil verkehrt: mit der systematischen Vernichtung der eigenen Zivilbevölkerung oder großer Teile von ihr im Modus völkerrechtlicher Verbrechen. Dann wird es zum legitimen Ziel einer humanitären Intervention. Wer aber militärisch gegen militärisch agierende Rebellen vorgeht, tut und wird dies nicht. Kollaterale Opfer unter Zivilisten, die das in kommunalen „Rebellenhochburgen“ unausweichlich mit sich bringt, ändern daran nichts. Dies werden, so bitter das ist, in den nächsten Tagen die kollateralen Opfern der Intervenienten in vermutlich nicht geringerer Zahl zur quälenden Anschaulichkeit bringen.

Das rechtsethische Prinzip des Notstands

Aber heißt dies alles nicht, einem geknechteten Volk das Recht bestreiten, sich gegen seinen Unterdrücker zu erheben? Nein. Es bezeichnet die Schwelle, jenseits derer externe Mächte in das Ringen eines Volkes „mit seiner inneren Krankheit“ gewaltsam eingreifen dürfen. Doch auch für die innere Legitimation eines bewaffneten Aufstands gibt es normative Schranken. Das zeigt sich, wenn man die rechtsethischen Prinzipien bedenkt, auf die er sich stützen kann. Für die kämpfenden Rebellen selbst, und stellvertretend auch für die mit ihrem Vorgehen Einverständenen, ist dies das Prinzip der Notwehr. Schon Aristoteles hat gesehen, dass sich daraus selbst die Ermordung des Tyrannen rechtfertigen lässt.

Aber die militärische Rebellion in einem modernen Staat ist immer verbunden mit zahllosen Opfern unter der Zivilbevölkerung, die den Aufstand nicht wünschen. Dass es Millionen Libyer gibt und viele unter den zivilen Opfern geben würde, die den bewaffneten Kampf gegen Gaddafi missbilligt haben, wusste man vorher. Natürlich ist deren Tötung auch Gaddafis Truppen zuzurechnen. Aber den Rebellen, die den Kampf begonnen haben, ebenfalls. Solchen Opfern wird der Tod für ein Ziel aufgezwungen, das sie nicht gewollt haben. Rechtfertigen lässt sich dies allenfalls nach dem rechtsethischen Prinzip des Notstands. Freilich ist grundsätzlich niemand verpflichtet, sein eigenes Leben für die Ziele Anderer opfern zu lassen. Das deutet an, wie hoch auch die staatsinterne Schwelle sein muss, von der an ein legitimer Widerstand gegen den Despoten zur organisierten militärischen Gewalt greifen darf.

Die Garantie des Gewaltverbots

Wenn die Machthaber Hitlerdeutschlands beginnen, die deutschen Juden, wenn die Hutus in Ruanda beginnen, die ruandischen Tutsis systematisch und massenhaft zu ermorden, dann ist nicht nur die Schwelle zur legitimen humanitären Intervention überschritten, sondern erst recht die zum legitimen gewaltsamen Bürgerkrieg. Ja, diese muss deutlich unterhalb jener liegen. Aber wo genau, ist eine ungeklärte Frage. Für ihre Antwort ist das Völkerrecht unzuständig. Sie ist Aufgabe der Rechtsphilosophie und der politischen Ethik. Bislang gibt es weltweit auch nicht den Schatten eines Konsenses dazu. Was aber Libyen angeht, so ist es alles andere als gewiss, dass diese Schwelle vor Beginn des Bürgerkriegs überschritten war. Im Gegenteil. So widerwärtig Gaddafis Regime gewesen und zunehmend geworden ist: dass der Widerstand dagegen das Recht zu einer Form gehabt hätte, die zahllosen Unbeteiligten, Frauen und Kinder eingeschlossen, den Tod aufzwingen musste, darf man mit Gründen bezweifeln. So schmerzlich das jeden anmuten muss, der das Recht auf demokratische Teilhabe als fundamentales Menschenrecht verteidigt: die libysche Opposition dürfte ihr legitimes, moralisch hochrangiges Ziel mit illegitimen Mitteln verfolgt haben. Der ägyptische und der tunesische Weg waren nicht nur klüger, sondern auch moralisch besser und wohl nicht zuletzt deshalb erfolgreicher.

Das ist ein trostloser Befund. Die Intervention der Alliierten, so berechtigt ihr Schutzanliegen ist, steht auf brüchigem normativem Boden. Die politische Ziellosigkeit des Unternehmens ist dabei das geringere Übel. Es geht um weit mehr als die pragmatisch beste Lösung eines einzelnen Konflikts: um die Garantie des Gewaltverbots und seiner vernünftigen Grenzen als Grundprinzip der Weltordnung. Der Krieg wird diese Grenzen weiter ins machtpolitisch Disponible verschieben. So berechtigt seine humanitären Ziele sind: Die Beschädigung der Fundamente des Völkerrechts decken sie nicht.

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The Helplessness of Japan's Helpers

'The Worst Situation I've Ever Seen'

More than 10 days after the tsunami swept Japan, many communities remain in a desperate state. The search for food, warmth and loved ones continues despite the ravaged infrastructure. The effects of the disaster are also now palpable in Tokyo, where power is being rationed, and in the country's crucial manufacturing industry. *By SPIEGEL Staff*

The hand-written messages adorn pieces of paper, boards and walls. There are hundreds or even thousands of them, hanging in the hallways of evacuation centers in Sendai, Natori and all the other devastated cities along the coastline of northeastern Japan.

They are written by people desperately trying to figure out if their loved ones are still alive. "I'm looking for Ichiro and Sumie Aizawa, 83 and 79. They were in the store when the earthquake struck," says one. Another reads: "I'll come back tomorrow to meet you. At 8 a.m. Please be here!" High-tech Japan hasn't witnessed such a flood of handwritten cries for help since World War II bombs devastated Japanese cities.

Occasionally you'll find messages tinged with both hope and despair. "A heater is on in the hall of the construction company," says one. "It is warm there." And sometimes, though rarely, the messages attest to the good fortune of survivors. "Yurika and her sister aren't hurt" is written in black felt-tip pen on a whiteboard in Sendai. "Everyone is alive!" stands right next to it.

Roughly one week after the disastrous earthquake and equally devastating tsunami, it's still impossible to give anywhere close to a precise estimate of the catastrophe's full scope. More than 450,000 people are homeless; almost 90,000 homes have been damaged. On Monday, the official number of missing had risen to 12,600, and 8,800 dead had been found.

While at least the Western media had moved its focus from the suffering of the Japanese to the threatening nuclear catastrophe, a second tragedy was playing out in the shadows of Fukushima. The highly industrialized country has been forced to a standstill. The disaster has paralyzed not only the devastated northern region facing the Pacific, but also the country's industrial base further south. It's almost as if the entire country has been forced to observe a moment of silence to honor the dead.

Japan at the Limits of its Resilience

When the flood waters retreated, they left behind a mess that has brought even this highly discipline and earthquake-tested nation to the limit of its resilience. It took rescue workers and soldiers days to make their way into some disaster-struck areas. Televisions around the world showed columns of soldiers and fire-rescue teams marching on foot through deserted oceans of rubble armed only with sticks. They attested to the helplessness of the helpers in this otherwise thoroughly organized state.

Early on in the rescue effort, the police, fire and military teams of rescuers and the foreigners who had come to help them started to find almost only corpses among the rubble of the devastated cities. Under normal circumstances, survivors can still be found days after an earthquake. But the tsunami, which was 10 meters (33 feet) high in places

and rolled over Japan's northeastern coast only minutes after the earthquake struck, dashed almost all hope that the missing were still alive.

The soldiers of the 21st Infantry Regiment of the Japan Self-Defense Forces were deployed in the otherwise idyllic bay of Kamiashi. There, they had to recover the bodies of fishermen from the tops of spruce trees. They also found almost only dead bodies among the layers of debris left behind by the crushing force of the quake and the water. Most of the missing are likely to have been swept out to sea when the tsunami's waters retreated.

'The Worst Situation I've Ever Seen'

Klaus Buchmüller is an almost 20-year veteran of the Technische Hilfswerk (THW), Germany's federal emergency relief agency. Buchmüller has brought aid to places such as Afghanistan, the Congo and Iraq, and he arrived in Tokyo as the head of a THW team some 40 hours after the quake had struck. "This is the worst situation I've ever seen," he says, adding that no one was prepared to deal with an earthquake, tsunami and potential nuclear disaster at the same time. "If I would have presented this kind of scenario in a training exercise, people would have called me crazy."

The phone on Buchmüller's desk has been ringing nonstop for days. Some of the callers are also Europeans who are stuck in the catastrophe area and desperate to get out. Transportation has been limited, there are fuel shortages, and the streets are often blocked by mountains of debris. There has yet to be a complete evacuation of the emergency areas.

In these places, many are facing shortages of crucial necessities: food, water and warmth. Though famous for their toughness, even the Japanese are starting to show signs of stress. Mako Matsukawa survived the destruction of her hometown of Onagawa, a small coastal city in the hardest-hit Miyagi prefecture. The 19-year-old university student had taken refuge in a middle-school gymnasium, whose windows had been shattered by the earthquake.

Matsukawa says that it took two days before food arrived and that, even then, she only got half a bowl of soup. Later, she and her father descended the hill into the tsunami-destroyed city, which used to be home to almost 10,000 people. Now, the city was just pile after pile of debris. When night came, the survivors lit fires in ditches and roasted fish washed in by the tsunami.

Food Lines

Matsukawa believes that people here have reached the limit of their patience. "Even though many people tried to ensure that children and the elderly were the first to eat, in practice it was first come, first served. In the end I was lucky enough to get some food. But there were many people who got nothing."

After a while Matsukawa couldn't stand the city any longer. The streets stank of fish, and the people reeked of smoke. There were only makeshift toilets and crowds of people lined up in front of them.

In the end, she and her family made their way to Sendai, the hard-hit city with a million inhabitants. There, they finally found enough to eat. "In the evening, we ate warm rice," she says, "and I was filled with joy."

But food supplies are also tight in Sendai and the stores' shelves are empty. With little external help coming in, Mayor Emiko Okuyama could only appeal to the public spirit of her city's inhabitants in an address. "Until we reach the point where there is enough food and shelter, I ask you to share provisions a little bit more," she said.

Snow and Aftershocks

In Ofunato, a city in the likewise devastated Iwate prefecture, Kimio Arai, 66, and his 86-year-old mother, Teru, are taking stock of the damage. What was once their house is now ruins. They are surrounded by chaos. They have no power, no heat, no Internet and no telephone service. To make matters worse, it has started snowing, and there was just another aftershock. But the two have decided to stay put.

"I don't think the government will help people like us," Kimio said, "at least we still have the remains of our house." He has yet to receive any help from the government. The only help they've had is food and drinks from neighbors who were lucky enough to not be hit so hard.

For now, Kimio and Teru are surviving on a diet which mostly consists of instant noodles and sweets brought by from neighbors willing to lend a hand. "We're worried about what the future might hold," Kimio says.

Japan Grinds to a Halt

Although the earthquake and the tsunami primarily ravaged the northeastern part of Japan, the industrial regions of the south did not escape unscathed. This is because Japanese companies are honed to implement the so-called "just-in-time" (JIT) production strategy, which tries to maximize supply-chain efficiency by minimizing the amount of time parts sit on shelves. But whenever there's a holdup in the delivery of new parts, the entire production process grinds to a sudden halt. For example, right after the catastrophe struck, Toyota had to send workers at its largest factories home because production had halted at parts suppliers in the north.

Likewise, Toshiba, which manufactures roughly a third of certain kinds of high-end memory chips for digital devices, could no longer use its factory in the Iwate prefecture. Production has also been halted at six Sony plants in the Miyagi and Fukushima prefectures, one of which was completely flooded.

The devastated area in the northeastern part of the country has traditionally been one of the weakest in terms of infrastructure, and it only accounts for roughly 4 percent of Japan's total economic output. Images from the emergency shelters in Fukushima and Iwate show that is primarily the elderly, farmers and fishermen who lost their already meager livelihoods in the mostly rural region.

Power-Gobbling Tokyo Goes Quiet

Still, it isn't just the destruction and danger of radioactive contamination that has brought the world's third-largest economy to its knees. The mere fact that there have been daily power shortages in the greater Tokyo metropolitan region, caused by having the nuclear power plants in Fukushima and elsewhere taken offline, has struck this high-tech nation at its core.

Indeed, Tokyo is suddenly no longer the city of our collective imagination. This power-gobbling urban organism usually has elevators and escalators that talk in simulated voices and robots that help the elderly take baths. But even days after the quake and tsunami, the city continues to be frozen in a state of collective shock.

Supermarkets have shut their doors, and the city's 16,000 traffic lights have been turned off. Thousands of trains, which bring an army of commuters into and out of the city every day, have been halted for days or hours at a time to save energy. Long lines of commuters wait outside of train stations for uniformed officials to shepherd them in groups to the platforms.

Land of the Setting Sun

Japan seems like a sumo wrestler who picked himself up off the ground, only to be knocked off his feet again.

In 2010, the country's economy enjoyed 2.8 percent growth, primarily thanks to demand from its booming neighbor China. But this pickup did little for many domestic consumers. After two decades of continuous crisis and sinking incomes, the ageing population is losing more and more hope.

Indeed, for now at least, this threefold catastrophe that began in the ocean just 32 kilometers (20 miles) from Sendai is transforming the old empire into the land of the setting sun.

REPORTED BY NICOLA ABÉ, NORIKO HAYASHI, SVEN RÖBEL, ANASTASIA SÜLT, WIELAND WAGNER

Translated from the German by Josh Ward

March 22, 2011

Spent Fuel Hampers Efforts at Japanese Nuclear Plant

By [HIROKO TABUCHI](#), [DAVID JOLLY](#) and [KEVIN DREW](#)

TOKYO — Workers at Japan's ravaged nuclear power plant on Tuesday renewed a bid to bring its command center back online and restore electricity to vital cooling systems but an overheating spent fuel pool hampered efforts and raised the threat of further radiation leaks.

The storage pool at Fukushima Daiichi Power Station's No. 2 Reactor, which holds spent nuclear fuel rods, was spewing steam late Tuesday, forcing workers to divert their attention to dousing the reactor building with water. If unchecked the water in the pool could boil away, exposing the fuel rods and releasing large amounts of radiation into the air.

"We cannot leave this alone and we must take care of it as quickly as possible," Hidehiko Nishiyama, deputy director of Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, told reporters.

Cooling systems at all of the plant's six reactors were knocked out by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, and power has since been restored to two reactors, units 5 and 6.

Workers continued efforts Tuesday on a power line to service the other four reactors though some of the machinery, including the water pumps that cool the reactors, might be damaged, officials said. That could mean more repair work before the four reactors can be connected to a power supply.

Another major effort was underway to restore full power and resume operations at the plant's central command center, which will make it easier for workers to monitor heat and water levels at the reactors. Recovery efforts have been hindered by difficulties in gauging readings of crucial data, forcing officials to work off aerial photos and speculation.

Workers continued pumping water into three reactors using fire hoses to keep them from overheating, while firefighters aimed streams of water at their spent fuel pools through gaps in the buildings housing the reactors, blown out in a series of explosions that rocked the site last week.

The crisis at the plant has raised fears about the spread of contamination of the environment and local food supply. The government has announced that traces of radioactive elements have been found in vegetables and raw milk from farms around the plant, prompting a government ban on shipments from those areas.

Elevated levels of radioactive iodine and cesium have also been detected in the seawater near Fukushima, and the government is testing seafood as a precaution, Yukio Edano, the chief cabinet secretary, said Tuesday. Government officials and health experts stress, however, that the doses are low and do not pose an immediate threat to human health.

Also on Tuesday the public broadcaster NHK, citing the government's Science Ministry, reported that radiation levels surpassing 400 times the normal level had been detected in soil about 25 miles from the Fukushima plant.

In the NHK report, a Gunma University professor said that radiation released by iodine-131 had been found to be 430 times the level normally detected in soil in Japan and that released by cesium-137 was 47 times the normal levels. The professor, Keigo Endo, said that there was no immediate health risk but that the radiation levels would require monitoring.

The nuclear crisis has also overshadowed the monumental task in Japan of providing aid to hundreds of thousands of people displaced from the quake and tsunami.

More than 237,000 people remain living in temporary shelters, NHK reported.

The Japanese Red Cross has from 300 to 350 people assigned to medical teams working in the disaster zone, said a spokesman, Francis Markus. The organization is still scaling up its relief operations but planning is already under way to help with recovery and reconstruction efforts, Mr. Markus said.

“Right now, people need hot showers daily, they need better sanitation systems,” he said.

Medical teams are treating large numbers of cases of hypothermia and pneumonia, Mr. Markus said, as well as illness from swallowing polluted water. Doctors also are treating conditions tied to Japan’s comparatively older population, like diabetes and high blood pressure. The need for medicine is constant, Mr. Markus said.

“One doctor in the field described the situation of receiving more medicine as pouring water in the desert,” he said.

Unseasonably cold weather has added to the daily struggle for refugees and relief workers. Local forecasters are predicting overnight temperatures this week to hover around freezing in the prefectures hardest hit by the tsunami, in the northeast, as a cold front moves into the region.

On Tuesday, the government raised the official death toll upward to 9,079, and said more than 12,600 were missing, although officials cautioned there could be overlap between the figures. The final death toll is likely to reach 18,000, the government has said.

The economy has also taken a battering. Honda and Toyota both said they would suspend domestic auto production until at least this weekend because of the difficulty of procuring parts.

Cosmo Oil said Monday that it had finally extinguished the dramatic fires at its Chiba refinery, north of Tokyo, that raged after the quake. But the 220,000-barrel-a-day facility, one of the country’s biggest, will be out of commission for some time.

Hiroko Tabuchi and David Jolly reported from Tokyo, and Kevin Drew from Hong Kong.

German energy policy

Nuclear power? No thanks (again)

The Economist Mar 15th 2011, 17:28 by B.U. | BERLIN



THIS post will attempt to avoid earthquake, tsunami or nuclear metaphors in discussing the effects of the [Japanese catastrophe](#) on Germany, but it will not be easy. Those effects have been sudden and dramatic, both for politics and for policy. Germany is hypersensitive to nuclear peril even at the calmest of times. Its reliance on nuclear power is not great: 17 plants account for around a quarter of electricity generation (see [chart](#)). France's 58 plants, by contrast, produce three quarters of the country's electricity.

Yet Germany's anti-nuclear movement is lively. The transport of nuclear waste provokes angry [blockades](#); on Saturday, after the Japanese disaster, more than 100,000 people [demonstrated](#) against nuclear power across Germany (see picture). Ordinary voters are suspicious of nuclear power. Outright hostility was a driving force in the rise of the opposition Green party.

So it was a bold move for Angela Merkel's "Christian-liberal" coalition to decide last autumn to [overturn](#) a plan enacted by a previous government to end nuclear-power generation in Germany by 2022. The plants, the government decreed, would be allowed to operate 12 years longer on average. This was part of a broader energy plan meant to boost conservation, improve energy security and move toward reliance on renewable sources of electricity. No one dared to suggest building new nuclear plants. But it seemed a pity to shut down depreciated plants producing cheap, climate-friendly electricity well before the end of their useful life.

Now, with the Fukushima plant spewing radioactivity, Mrs Merkel's courage has failed. Yesterday she announced that the government would enact a three-month "[moratorium](#)" on its plan to extend the operating life of nuclear plants. Today she said that seven plants built before 1980 would be [shut down](#) temporarily. Some will probably not reopen. The Japanese disaster is a "turning point in the history of the industrial world," she said. (There is no sign, though, that a new tax slapped on the nuclear-power companies last year will be scrapped.)

Mrs Merkel's decision has much to do with politics, though her allies stoutly deny it. Three of Germany's 16 states are holding elections this month: Saxony-Anhalt this Sunday and Baden-Württemberg and Rhineland-Palatinate the following Sunday. The stakes are especially high in Baden-Württemberg, which has been governed by Mrs Merkel's party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), for more than half a century. A loss would be a disaster for her.

Pre-tsunami, the CDU and its coalition partner in Baden-Württemberg, the Free Democratic Party (which is also part of Mrs Merkel's government) had been narrowly ahead of the Social Democrats and the Greens. But Stefan Mappus, the state's premier, is one of the CDU's loudest advocates of nuclear power; he wanted an even longer extension of the nuclear operating deadline (and when Mrs Merkel's environment minister, Norbert Röttgen, resisted, hinted that he should resign). Post-tsunami, Mr Mappus's enthusiasm for fission looked politically dangerous. Hence Mrs Merkel's hasty retreat from the nuclear-deadline extension.

The opposition has been quick to accuse Mrs Merkel of [trickery](#): won't she go back to her pro-nuclear ways after the moratorium expires and the elections are safely out of the way? Probably not. Mrs Merkel knows that German nukes are no more dangerous now than they were before the Fukushima explosions. A trained physicist, when asked why her assessment of the risk has suddenly changed, she squirms. But she also knows that the political risks have risen, probably for good. That means that the government will have to come up with a new energy policy that reassures voters without driving up costs or jeopardising its ambitious goals for reducing carbon emissions. Germany may thus be in the market for a new "bridge" technology. Perhaps it will be gas.

RONY BRAUMAN - L'intervention en Libye, "un engrenage épouvantable"

Au troisième jour de l'intervention internationale en Libye, le consensus qui entoure l'action militaire française semble être remis en cause. Dans une interview sur France-Inter (vidéo ci-dessous), Rony Brauman estime que l'"on s'engage dans un engrenage absolument épouvantable".

"Ce qui me gêne dans cette opération, c'est qu'on prétend installer la démocratie et un Etat de droit avec des bombardiers (...); à chaque fois qu'on a essayé de le faire, non seulement on a échoué mais le remède que'on prétendait apporter était pire que le mal", dénonce l'ancien président de Médecins sans frontières

L'humanitaire cite la guerre en Afghanistan, dans laquelle les Occidentaux sont "déjà enlisés", et l'intervention de l'ONU en Somalie en 1992 : "Des interventions destinées à prévenir des massacres, j'en ai vu d'autres, elles ont gelé la situation et les massacres qui se sont produits ultérieurement ont été pires", affirme Rony Brauman.

Surtout, il s'interroge sur les buts de l'opération, "flous et inatteignables". "A quel moment on va pouvoir dire 'mission accomplie' ? (...) Comme il n'y en a pas (des objectifs), ça n'arrivera pas", poursuit Rony Brauman.

Interrogé sur des mesures alternatives, il soutient la diplomatie et le renseignement : "On ne va pas faire la révolution à la place des Libyens, nous ne sommes pas Dieu, nous ne sommes pas tout-puissants", conclut-il.

Partagez cet article



[Aamulehti - Finland](#)

Allies lack goals for Libya mission

Since the air strikes against Libya began the allies have been at odds about how the intervention should be continued. The liberal daily Aamulehti bemoans the lack of a clear strategy, which it says must be a prerequisite for Finnish involvement: "After the initial success it is now unclear what will happen next. Is the ultimate goal the complete deposition of Gaddafi's government or is the rest of the world content to see Libya split in two, with Gaddafi and his buddies ruling the west of the country and the rebels in control of the east? The dissension about goals within the alliance is only compounding this lack of clarity. ... A roadmap needs to be quickly charted out for the Libya operation in which the allies lay down common and realistic goals and acceptable means for achieving them, as well as a timetable. Without such a roadmap Finland can't even begin to consider joining the alliance's operation, should we be asked to do so." (22/03/2011)

» **full article (external link, Finnish)**

More from the press review on the subject » **Security Policy / Crises / War**, » **Finland**, » **Libya**

21 March 2011 Last updated at 17:35 GMT

BBC NEWS

Middle East press welcomes Libya intervention



British jets are flying down to southern Italy to join Allies' airstrikes against military targets in Libya

The intervention in Libya has generally been welcomed by newspaper commentators in the Middle East. Many compare the action to the invasion of Iraq eight years previously, highlighting the legitimacy of the current operation compared to disputes over the 2003 invasion.

However, columnists in two London-based pan-Arab titles are more wary.

Mazin Hamad in Qatar's pro-government [Al-Watan](#)

"The West has sent a unique message to the Arab world, which means that the international family, to which the West is the main contributor, will not stand by with its hands tied as massacres are committed against an Arab people by their ruler. This message was not there when the USA and Britain attacked Iraq in 2003 without UN permission... But the picture is totally different today. The West... is standing by the Arab people."

UAE's private [Akhbar al-Arab](#)

"Russia, China and three other countries abstained from voting on the draft resolution to impose a no-fly zone... Abstaining from voting is the middle ground between supporting and rejecting the draft. However, the decision leans towards supporting the resolution more than rejecting it because rejecting the resolution required China and Russia to use their veto against it but the two countries only abstained, giving the resolution an international outlook and making it appear unanimous."

UAE's pro-government [Al-Bayan](#)

"We hope that Muammar Gaddafi will take note of the united stand by the world not to stand idle over events in Libya and that he will make the appropriate decisions. Tripoli also has to promptly review its actions, give priority to the voice of reason and conscience rather than threats and intimidation, and avoid the loss of innocent lives."

Turki al-Dakhil in Saudi pro-government [Al-Watan](#)

"The international intervention to save Libyans from Gaddafi's cruel grip has come at the right time. As we read we find that the decision came from the Security Council, even though we have reservations about some of its resolutions, especially the veto regarding the Palestinians. However, its decision to save Libya was historic."

Khalaf al-Harbi in Saudi centrist [Ukaz](#)

"The brutal manner in which Gaddafi dealt with his people was a major cause of the Arab people's welcoming Western military intervention to liberate Libya... So once again Arabs enter history by proving that there is no cure for (Arab) tyranny other than foreign military intervention."

Hida Hizam in Algeria's highest-selling independent [El-Khabar](#)

"The Libyan people will not lose anything if the US and France take control of their country now. Their conditions will not be as they were under Gaddafi... Gaddafi was no better than the Italian colonialists."

Samir Rajab in Egypt's pro-government [Al-Jumhuriyah](#)

"What is happening in Libya may be a lesson for the remaining Arab rulers: Try to save your heads and your people before the time comes, and it is obviously coming."

Hamud al-Hattab in Kuwait's independent [Al-Siyassah](#)

"Sarkozy, Obama and Cameron - the new youth of the West is moving the Arab world and deciding the future political life of the Arab youth who moved against the injustice of some of their leaders. Is it unreasonable to let the youth decide their future themselves?"

Yahya Rabah in Palestinian Authority-owned [Al-Hayat al-Jadidah](#)

"The Arabs are entering a new era that will witness many collapses. We might invite the old occupiers and ask them to occupy our countries, and we might destroy everything only to discover after the dust settles that we have nothing new with which to begin. This is indeed a new era with confusing criteria. What is right and what is wrong?"

Zvi Barel in liberal broadsheet [Ha'aretz](#)

"Drawing comparisons between the Western countries' attack on Libya and the two wars in Iraq, as well as the current war in Afghanistan, is easy. True, the objective in each case was to destroy the regime - but in the past military actions, the leader or regime was described as posing a real threat to the Western world... In Libya's case today the conditions have changed. Muammar Gaddafi is a leader who poses a danger to his own people and who is trying to block the wave of revolution that has engulfed the Middle East."

Abd-al-Bari Atwan in London-based Arab nationalist [Al-Quds Al-Arabi](#)

"You cannot watch US missiles falling like rain over Libyan towns and areas and follow the propaganda that accompanies it without remembering the aerial bombardment of Iraq, which was targeted twice... the international community cannot stand idly by while Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and his sons' brigades slaughter the Libyan people without mercy, but you cannot help but wonder about the West's selectivity in intervening militarily to protect certain Arab revolutions and entirely ignoring others."

Ahmad al-Dulaymi in London-based pro-Libyan [Al-Arab al-Alamiyah](#)

"On this day in 2003 the invaders... led by the USA... launched a barbaric and brutal attack on an Arab capital, the Muslims' beloved Baghdad... Today the same coalition is waging another attack on another Arab country, which is Libya, with the same flimsy arguments put forward by the assailants before the occupation of Iraq."

[BBC Monitoring](#) *selects and translates news from radio, television, press, news agencies and the internet from 150 countries in more than 70 languages. It is based in Caversham, UK, and has several bureaux abroad.*

Confusion Over Who Leads Libya Strikes, and for How Long

By [STEVEN ERLANGER](#)

PARIS — As the military operation continued over [Libya](#) on Monday, there was some confusion about which country or organization is actually leading it, and for how long. France, Britain and the United States are in charge of their own operations, which each have different code names.

The participants are being “coordinated” by the United States, but not commanded by it, according to the French Defense Ministry. The Americans, with the most assets, seem to be the lead coordinator, but Washington has said it wants to step back after the initial phase and have [NATO](#) take charge of maintaining a no-fly zone and arms embargo.

Britain wants NATO to take over but France does not, and Italy is threatening to rethink its participation unless NATO takes command.

In London, Prime Minister David Cameron told Parliament that the intention is to turn over command for the international force implementing a no-fly zone to NATO. “Let me explain how the coalition will work — it’s operating under U.S. command with the intention that this will transfer to NATO,” Mr. Cameron said. That would allow all NATO allies who wanted to participate to do so. “Clearly the mission would benefit from that and from using NATO’s tried-and-tested machinery in command and control,” he said.

But France objects to turning Libya into a NATO operation, arguing from the start that Arab countries do not want a NATO label on the mission. Foreign Minister Alain Juppé said in Brussels on Monday that “the [Arab League](#) does not wish the operation to be entirely placed under NATO responsibility. It isn’t NATO which has taken the initiative up to now.”

Mr. Juppé said that “today the United States is coordinating the interventions in close coordination with France and Britain. In a few days, if the United States pulls back from the operation, NATO is ready to come in with its support,” which he described as “its contribution to the planning and execution of operations.”

But France does not want NATO to have political control of the mission, he said. “It’s a coalition of countries leading the operation, so they are in political control of it, and Arab countries, North American and European countries are participating.”

Turkey is also reluctant to have NATO take charge, since it is the only Muslim member of the alliance, has opposed the use of force in Libya and was excluded from a Saturday planning meeting in Paris. But Turkey, which has kept lines open to the Libyan leader, Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#), is likely to allow NATO to run the operation as long as it does not invade Libya with any ground forces or occupy the country.

Germany also wants no part of the Libyan operation, which it opposed.

And Italy, which has long had close ties with Libya, is threatening to rethink its position unless NATO takes over the operations, Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said in Brussels on Monday. Italy does not want to wage a war in Libya, and unless the mission came under the command of NATO, Italy would have to “reflect on the use of its bases,” he said. “If there were a multiplication in the number of command centers, which would be a mistake in itself, we will have to study a way for Italy to regain control of its bases,” he said.

Italy has provided seven air bases and eight aircraft for the Libyan operation, marking a break in its relations with Colonel Qaddafi, but with the intention of protecting the civilian population. “It shouldn’t be a war on Libya,” Mr. Frattini said.

Mr. Frattini’s spokesman, Maurizio Massari, said: “We want to see NATO command and control on Libya. At the moment we have three separate commands, and this is causing a lot of problems with coordination of the operations.”

France objects, Mr. Massari said. But if worse comes to worst, he said, Italy “will consider creating a national Italian command for those operations that use our air bases” in order not to lose control.

Washington may be willing to have France and Britain run the operation as a coalition, but that would be hard for the two countries to do without using NATO assets for command and control, most of which belong to the United States. But Washington has never been willing to put its troops under the command of any other nation, one reason that even in NATO, the Supreme Commander Europe, is always an American.

Even if NATO does take command of the Libyan operation, it would take several days to organize.

On Monday, the French Defense Ministry said that its planes had flown 55 sorties over the last three days, representing some 400 flight hours. Four armored vehicles were destroyed from the air on Saturday, and one was destroyed on Monday south of Benghazi, said Col. Thierry Burkhard, a ministry spokesman.

Dislike for Qaddafi Gives Arabs a Point of Unity

By [MICHAEL SLACKMAN](#)

CAIRO — With his brutal military assault on civilians, and his rantings about spiked Nescafé, Col. [Muammar el-Qaddafi](#) handed many leaders across the Arab world what had otherwise eluded them: A chance to side with the people while deflecting attention from their own citizens' call for democracy, political analysts around the region said. And they really do not like him.

Even Arab leaders most critical of the United States' intervention in the Middle East have reluctantly united behind the military intervention in Libya. That has given a boost to Arab leaders in places like Saudi Arabia who are at the same moment working to silence political opposition in their backyards.

“The Arab street reaction to the Western attacks on Libya has been warm,” said Hilal Khasan, chairman of the department of political studies at American University of Beirut. “This is not Iraq.”

It is another disorienting twist in this season of upheaval in the Arab world. A fierce resentment about a legacy of Western intervention, fed by historical memories of colonialism and present-day anger at the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, has given way to a belief that the Libyan rebels desperately needed help that only the West could fully provide. The apparent hypocrisy of repressive Arab leaders endorsing military action against a repressive Qaddafi government did not escape many Arabs.

“I see hypocrisy in everything the Arab leaders do, and I'm talking as a person of the Arab world,” said Randa Habib, a political commentator in Jordan. “I wanted them to take such a decision. There were too many people being killed in Libya. That man is cuckoo.”

This new and unpredictable tone seemed to partly explain the flip-flopping of [Amr Moussa](#), the longtime secretary general of the [Arab League](#) who plans to run for the Egyptian presidency. Last week, the Arab League asked the [United Nations](#) to impose a no-fly zone in Libya, largely on humanitarian grounds. On Sunday, Mr. Moussa said military action there had gone too far. But he repeated his contention that the no-fly zone could not have been imposed were it not for the Arab League.

“We respect the no-fly zone, and there is no conflict with it,” he said, in a clarification that was seen in Egypt, given his political ambitions, as an overt acknowledgment of the public support for the actions in Libya. A day earlier Mr. Moussa had appeared to back away from support for the military intervention.

“In a way, the Arab League is trying to follow the sentiment of the Arab street,” said Shafeeq Ghabra, a political science professor at Kuwait University. “The street is now more in control. If we ever had an Arab street, this is the moment.”

Many experts noted that that was itself a remarkable turn of events, given that the league had long been a special-interest group for the very leaders who had been pressed by their people to allow democratic change. At the very moment of the vote, some of those leaders were repressing their own citizens' calls for that change, especially in the Persian Gulf, where Saudi troops rolled into Bahrain to help crush a popular uprising.

“I don't think the Arab League has any kind of legitimacy,” said Muhammad al-Masry, a researcher at the Center for Strategic Studies in Amman, Jordan. But, he added, “I think the Arab leaders should have taken this decision through the Arab League.”

In an article titled “The Lesser of Two Evils,” in the Egyptian daily newspaper Shorouk, the commentator Fahmy Howeidy said that the Western bombing runs on Libya were “shocking and agonizing for us.” He added, “We did not wish to stand and watch airstrikes being directed against any Arab country.”

And yet, Mr. Howeidy wrote, “the practices of the forces of Colonel Qaddafi have become an aggression against the right to life itself,” adding with a degree of resigned regret, “We dream of the day where the Arab regime is able to defend the Arab people, but that day remains elusive.”

There is arguably no Arab leader besides Colonel Qaddafi who might have been able to unite much of the region against him all at once — though Algeria and Syria did not agree with the no-fly zone — and empower the much-maligned Arab League, which is an institution often mocked by Arab commentators for failing to carry out its pronouncements. It was clear that those backing the no-fly zone, the analysts said, especially the king of Saudi Arabia and the emir of Qatar, most likely drew personal satisfaction from the effort to push Colonel Qaddafi from power, though they did not say so.

“This is not related actually to Qaddafi’s attitude to his people or the way he is ruling Libya,” Mr. Masry said. “It is related to his attitude. He was very unpredictable.”

Saudi animosity runs deep. In 2004, Colonel Qaddafi was accused of being directly involved in a plot to assassinate King Abdullah, who was then the crown prince. Then in 2009, Colonel Qaddafi embarrassed the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, and infuriated King Abdullah, during an Arab summit meeting in Doha, Qatar.

Colonel Qaddafi first denounced King Abdullah “as a British product and American ally,” concluding by calling him a “liar.” When Sheikh Hamad tried to quiet him, he said, “I am an international leader, the dean of Arab rulers, the king of kings of Africa and imam of Muslims, and my international status does not allow me to descend to a lower level.”

At that point the sound was cut on the television broadcast and Colonel Qaddafi stormed out of the room, leaving a memory that surely made it easier for those leaders to endorse the no-fly zone, political analysts said.

Ms. Habib, the political commentator, said, “He had no friends in the Arab world.”

This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:

Correction: March 22, 2011

Because of an editing error, a previous version of this article misattributed the following quote to Muhammad al-Masry: “the practices of the forces of Colonel Qaddafi have become an aggression against the right to life itself,” adding with a degree of resigned regret, “We dream of the day where the Arab regime is able to defend the Arab people, but that day remains elusive.”

The far right in northern Europe

On the march

Populist anti-immigration parties are performing strongly across northern Europe

The Economist Mar 17th 2011 | *COPENHAGEN AND THE HAGUE* | from the print edition

FRANCE is not the only European country suffering a far-right surge. In an arc of countries spreading north-east from the Netherlands, populist parties are cutting a swathe through politics, appealing to electorates with various blends of nationalism, Euroscepticism (and euro-scepticism) and outright xenophobia.

The country to watch is Finland, where the True Finns have emerged from obscurity to have a shot at joining government after an election on April 17th. Surging poll ratings (see table) put them on a par with Finland's three main parties. "If the party gets enough seats", says Pasi Saukkonen, a political scientist at Helsinki University, "it would be quite difficult to exclude them from negotiations." Timo Soini, the party leader, who casts himself as a jovial everyman, is pitching for the premiership.

The nasty crew
Far-right parties in northern Europe

	Political status	Latest opinion poll, % support	Seats in parliament	Key issues
Sweden Democrats	Opposition	5.7	20 of 349	Immigration, crime, Islam
Danish People's Party	Supporting minority government	15.2	25 of 179	Immigration, Euroscepticism, traditional values
True Finns	Opposition	16.9	5 of 200	The EU and euro bail-outs, immigration
Freedom Party (The Netherlands)	Supporting minority government	17.6	24 of 150	Islam, anti-establishment, law and order

Sources: *The Economist*; Demoskop; Gallup; Taloustutkimus; Synovate

Finland's mainstream politicians have acknowledged the ascent of the True Finns. Mari Kiviniemi, prime minister and leader of the Centre Party, says she could work with the party. Her finance minister, Jyrki Katainen, leader of the conservative National Coalition Party, says Mr Soini could be prime minister.

The party has broadened its appeal from its rural base and is filching voters from all sides. It adopts an anti-immigrant pose, but its signature issue is hostility to the European Union and particularly the bail-outs of poorer southern members of the euro by fiscally prudent northerners. Its influence may already be visible in the hard line struck by the Finnish government in recent euro-zone negotiations.

Another Nordic party that can point to influence over government is the Danish People's Party (DF). Under its influence the minority centre-right coalition it has propped up for the past decade has turned Denmark's immigration regime into one of Europe's tightest. The DF's leader, Pia Kjaersgaard, is often voted Denmark's most powerful woman, ahead of the queen. Buoyed by the government's appointment last week of a new gung-ho immigration minister, the DF upped the ante by demanding the prohibition of purpose-built mosques and compulsory psalm-singing in schools. It hopes to do well in elections that must be held by November.

Their Swedish counterparts, the Sweden Democrats, enjoyed success at a general election last September, entering parliament for the first time (decked out in pastoral national costume). There was speculation that they might become an ally of government. But unlike their Danish brethren they have been shunned by other parties. Last week Erik Ullenhag, Sweden's integration minister, accused them of intolerance and Islamophobia. But their poll ratings are holding up.

In the Netherlands the anti-immigrant Freedom Party (PVV) and its leader, Geert Wilders, are still hot stuff, despite an unspectacular performance in recent provincial elections. Polls put the party second only to the Liberals, whose minority coalition with the Christian Democrats Mr Wilders has supported in parliament since last year, in a Denmark-style arrangement.

Some in the political establishment thought that bringing Mr Wilders into power would temper his appeal. That plan does not seem to be working. Mr Wilders paints himself as an anti-establishment figure, but he is well versed in playing the system, exploiting his insider-outsider position to maximum advantage. His criticism of ministers can be scathing, but is limited to personalities, or issues outside the government agreement he has signed.

The PVV still plays the Muslim card—anti-Islamism, Mr Wilders says, remains his “passion”—but it is seeking to broaden its hand with other themes, ranging from the eccentric (expelling “imported” animal species such as Highland cows) to the worrying (“scum camps” for repeat offenders).

Other countries have not been immune to the far right’s rise. Since 2009 the British National Party has been represented in the European Parliament. The Vlaams Belang remains a force in Belgium’s dysfunctional politics. The virus, it seems, is spreading.

France's far right

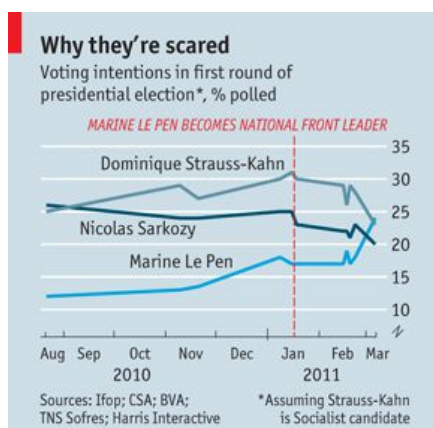
They can't keep her down

What can France's political establishment do about the rise of Marine Le Pen?

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THE setting was as carefully chosen as her words. Marine Le Pen, the new leader of France's National Front, dropped in to visit an immigrant-detention centre on the Italian island of Lampedusa this week, to alert the French to the "waves of immigration" flooding in from the Arab world. But she mixed hard talk with a disarming air of compassion. "If I listened only to my heart, of course I would let you board my boat," she declared. "But my boat is too fragile and, if I take you, my boat will sink... Europe does not have the capacity to welcome all these illegals." The moment captured all that makes Ms Le Pen such a threat: an eye for a stunt, an appeal to populist fears, and above all a knack for dressing up intolerance as common sense.



A year before France's presidential election, the woman who only recently stepped out of the shadow of her father, Jean-Marie, is rocking the political establishment. Last week, when a poll showed that Ms Le Pen would beat President Nicolas Sarkozy into the second-round run-off, his aides tried to dismiss it as an outlier. But since then other polls have found the same. Ms Le Pen could squeeze out the unpopular Mr Sarkozy with support of just 19%, according to one poll. Her best first-round score so far is a hefty 24% (see chart).

Although voting is still a year away, these polls are exercising many French people for a simple reason: they have already lived through the shock of electing the National Front into the second round. In 2002 Jean-Marie Le Pen, a blustering former paratrooper, beat the Socialists' candidate, Lionel Jospin, into the run-off against Jacques Chirac. Ms Le Pen stands virtually no chance of winning in 2012. But she could cause trouble by pushing out one of the mainstream candidates in the first round, as her father did. And this time, both the left and the right are vulnerable.

Ms Le Pen's ascension is all the more remarkable given the nature of the National Front. She is a woman in a party with a strong macho current. She is divorced, in a far-right milieu with traditional Catholic overtones. She is young, at 42, in a movement that draws heavily on older voters. Yet this lawyer and member of the European

Parliament seems to be turning all this to her advantage, rejuvenating the Front and ridding it of the jackbooted imagery that clung to her father. Whereas Jean-Marie thundered about losing Algeria and dismissed the gas chambers as a “detail” of history, his daughter has called the Holocaust “the height of barbarity”. With her courteous demeanour and tempered vocabulary, she is single-handedly decontaminating the National Front brand.

What Ms Le Pen shares with her father is an anti-establishment and anti-European appeal to ordinary folk turned off by the cronyism of the left and the right. In that she may be boosted by Saif al-Islam Qaddafi’s claim this week that his father’s regime helped finance Mr Sarkozy’s election campaign. (The Elysée denied the claim, and Mr Qaddafi provided absolutely no evidence, though said he would.)

Ms Le Pen wants to withdraw France from the euro, and to re-erect border controls with neighbouring countries. Yet she has deftly recast her father’s more toxic talk about immigration and Islam. Although she still wants to end all immigration, give French nationals preference for jobs and bring back the death penalty, out has gone the obnoxious xenophobic tone. Instead she casts herself as the defender of cherished French principles: *laïcité* (secularism) and women’s rights. When she compares Muslims who pray in French streets to the Nazi occupation, she says this is not a gesture against Islam but a secular effort to keep religion out of public space. Who, she seems to say, could disagree?

Fewer and fewer people, it appears. One poll this week, by TNS Sofres, found that 38% of respondents think of the National Front as a party of the patriotic, traditional right (rather than the extremist, xenophobic variety), up from 28% a few years ago. Mr Sarkozy has said his party will fire any candidate who tries to make a local electoral pact with the Front. Even so, in two-round elections in French cantons, on March 20th and 27th, the National Front could make it into the second round in up to 200 of the 2,000-odd constituencies, not only in the south, its traditional base, but in the old industrial towns of the north and rural districts, too. No longer just a party of protest, the Front is seeking to govern.

What can mainstream politicians do? In the past Mr Sarkozy reached out to far-right voters with coded talk about immigration, declaring that “if anybody doesn’t like France, they should leave”. In 2007 this ate into Mr Le Pen’s vote, keeping him out of the run-off. In office, Mr Sarkozy has kept at it, creating a (short-lived) ministry of national identity, tightening immigration and citizenship laws, banning the burqa and closing Roma camps.

This approach seems to have reached its limits. Instead of robbing the far right of votes, Mr Sarkozy appears now to be handing them support. Take a plan for a “national debate” on *laïcité* in France on April 5th. Just like yet another debate on “national identity” two years ago, it looks more like an electoral stunt than a serious effort to reflect on the place of Islam in France. His own voters sense opportunism. Muslims feel stigmatised. Mr Sarkozy’s “diversity” adviser, Abderrahmane Dahmane, was fired last week after calling on Muslims not to renew their membership of the ruling party unless the debate was cancelled. Claude Guéant, the interior minister, had to go to the Paris Mosque this week to calm matters. Meanwhile the National Front is quietly reaping the benefit.

Mr Sarkozy is in a corner. If he avoids the subject, he leaves the door open for the National Front. If he keeps stirring it up, he does their work for them. As for the Socialists, who ought to be exploiting Mr Sarkozy’s unpopularity, they look just as exposed and unprepared. In the past François Mitterrand, a Socialist president, relied on the National Front to split the right. But working-class voters are deserting today’s bourgeois Socialist Party for the Front as much as they are Mr Sarkozy’s party. And the Socialists do not yet have a nominee for 2012. There are at least four serious potential candidates for this autumn’s primary, among them Dominique Strauss-Kahn, head of the IMF. This week he appeared in a fly-on-the-wall television documentary to say that he had made up his mind as to whether to run...but would not reveal his decision until July.

The risks exposed

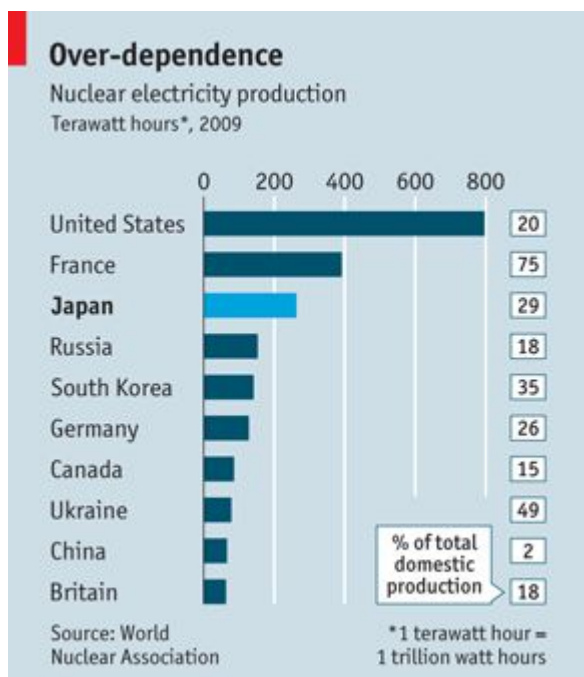
What the damage to the Fukushima plant portends for Japan—and the world

The Economist Mar 17th 2011 | from the print edition



AP Reliving the horror their grandparents knew

ONE danger of earthquakes, from Tokyo to San Francisco, has always been the flames that rise from the wreckage when fires are unleashed from their hearths. In Japan they have been called the “flowers of Edo”. But no earlier flames have been as foreboding as those that have erupted sporadically from the stricken Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power station. The horrifying spectacle will not end the planet’s nuclear endeavours. It could, however, reshape them radically.



Of the nuclear plants that provide about a third of Japan’s electricity (see chart), Fukushima Dai-ichi is not the first to be paralysed by an earthquake. But it is the first to be laid low by the technology’s dependence on a ready supply of water for cooling. To be near water is usually to be near the sea. And in this case, that meant right in the path of a tsunami.

The immediate impact of the catastrophic failures at Fukushima is not yet clear. It is worse than America’s near-disaster at Three Mile Island in 1979, which was fairly swiftly brought under control. But it is highly unlikely to be as devastating as the accident at Chernobyl in Ukraine in 1986, which sent a radioactive cloud across Europe that caused the deaths of an uncertain number of people, possibly well into the thousands.

The 40-year-old reactors in the nuclear power station run by the Tokyo Electric Power Company faced a disaster beyond anything their designers were required to imagine, and shut themselves down appropriately. They might have got through comparatively unscathed, as did the reactors at Fukushima Dai-ni, a similar plant farther along the coast. But at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant things went wrong in many ways.

Nuclear reactors are protected by what plant designers call “defence in depth”. Some of these defences are simple barriers. The nuclear fuel is encased in hard alloys to construct fuel rods; the reactor core that these rods make up, and the water it sits in, are contained within a steel pressure vessel. That in turn sits within a larger steel structure, the primary containment vessel. Around it sits the steel and concrete secondary containment structure.

Other defences are actions, rather than things. The first action to be taken in the case of an earthquake is an emergency shutdown, which is achieved by thrusting control rods that sit below the reactor in its pressure vessel up into the reactor’s core. The control rods soak up the neutrons that mediate the chain reaction which produces most of a reactor’s energy, shutting it down. But other reactions will continue for a while; straight after shutdown, a reactor like those at Fukushima Dai-ichi is still a heat engine as powerful as a fair-sized jet engine at full throttle, locked in a small tight box. Things can get hot pretty quickly if there is no way of keeping it cool.

And after the tsunami hit, Fukushima Dai-ichi lost its cool. Generators stopped; electrical switching equipment was flooded. Attempts failed to get the cooling system working with batteries and generators from elsewhere. The emergency power eventually ran out altogether.

The Fukushima Dai-ichi plant uses boiling-water reactors, which are basically electric kettles where the nuclear reactor is the heating element at the bottom. If the kettle can’t be turned off and its spout is bunged up because the steam is radioactive, the situation inside will deteriorate. The amount of water will decrease, until eventually the nuclear core at the bottom is uncovered. It then gets even hotter even quicker, and bits of it will start to melt and react with the steam. The steam, meanwhile, will become ever more plentiful, and pressure will build up to a potentially explosive level. This seems to have happened to some extent in all three reactors.

In reactor 1, and later in reactor 3, steam contaminated with some radioactive elements was allowed out of the pressure vessel and into the larger containment vessel that surrounds it. There hydrogen in the released gas met a spark and exploded, blowing the roofs off the buildings but not, it seemed at the time, damaging the containment systems. With the primary containment vessel of reactor 1 still too full of steam, the radical decision was made to flood it with sea water to absorb the heat. The sea water was also laced with boric acid, which can soak up stray neutrons that the control rods miss.

Reactor 3’s pressure vessel was then treated the same way, as, eventually, was reactor 2’s. But at some point, according to the company’s reports, reactor 2 boiled dry, and also—the two things possibly connected—suffered damage to the doughnut at the bottom of the containment vessel in an explosion on Tuesday morning. That is why it was reactor 2 which, by March 15th, was posing the greatest threat. Later it was reported that the containment was compromised at reactor 3 as well.

At around this stage the problems of the deteriorating plant began to spread. On March 15th, and again on the 16th, fires started in the building housing reactor 4. The reactor was safely off-line for maintenance when the quake struck, but there is spent fuel in storage tanks in the building, as elsewhere in the plant. This, too, needs to be covered with water that is circulated so as to keep things cool. At reactor 4 and reactor 3 spent fuel may have been exposed to the air. After the fire, radiation levels inside the plant soared. At this point, the level outside the plant was fairly high too. At one stage an unprotected person at the main gate would have received the maximum allowable yearly dose for a nuclear-industry worker in a matter of hours.

Conflicting reports of how much radiation was spreading farther afield were enough to cause panic. Matters worsened when America announced that it thought radiation levels were extremely high, and could severely constrain efforts to control the situation. On March 17th these included the use of helicopters and possibly

water cannon to top up the water in the spent-fuel stores, bulldozing new access paths and yet more efforts to supply the plant with reliable electricity from the grid.

Chain reaction

The Japanese are now sure to reconsider their reliance on nuclear power, which is currently provided by 55 reactors, many similar in design to those now in trouble. Despite high spending on solar power over the years, the only real alternatives are imported natural gas or dirty coal. In the short term, with large parts of the country's nuclear-generating capacity shut down, more gas will have to be imported. If the long term has a lot less nuclear power in it, there will be a corresponding need for gas and probably coal.

What of the rest of the world? Industry boosters had hopes of a nuclear renaissance as countries try to cut back on carbon emissions. There has been talk of a boom like that of the 1970s, when 25 or so plants started construction each year in rich countries. Not any more. Public opinion will surely take a dive. At the least, it will be difficult to find the political will or the money to modernise the West's ageing reactors, though without modernisation they will not get any safer. The searing images from Fukushima, and the sense of floundering haplessness, will not be forgotten even if final figures reveal little damage to health.

The German government has declared a three-month moratorium on its controversial plan, agreed only last autumn, to prolong the life of its nuclear plants. This is likely to lead to the shutdown of its seven oldest plants and their permanent removal from the power grid. America's never more than limited enthusiasm for new nuclear plants may disappear altogether.

If there was nothing else the matter, the nuclear industry might be able to weather a not-too-bad final outcome at Fukushima. After all, new reactors are said, with some justification, to be a lot safer. And most countries have the option of building them in seismically inactive zones, a luxury Japan does not enjoy. Even old reactors in the West, such as America's boiling-water reactors, have been revamped in such a way as to preclude, it is thought, anything like the power outage that doomed the similar reactors at Fukushima Dai-ichi. But something else is the matter. Although the new reactors may be much safer than the old ones, they are a lot more expensive.

It is hard to say how much more expensive, since so few are being built. Generous loan guarantees have failed to get any commissioned so far in America. Two are under construction in western Europe, and both are over-budget. The labour of getting safety approvals makes investors jittery. And natural gas is abundant, far cheaper and relatively clean.

Yet the world will not necessarily turn en masse against nuclear power. Although events at Three Mile Island halted construction of nuclear plants in America, elsewhere—in France and, strikingly, in Japan—it continued. France, which has 58 nuclear reactors, seems to see the disaster in Japan as an opportunity rather than a setback for its nuclear industry. President Nicolas Sarkozy sang the industry's praises on March 14th, saying that French-built reactors have lost international tenders because they are expensive: "but they are more expensive because they are safer."

But the region where nuclear power is set to grow fastest, and seems least likely to be deterred, is the rest of Asia. Of the 62 plants under construction in the world, two-thirds are in Asia. Russia plans another ten. By far the most important nascent nuclear power is China, which has 13 working reactors and 27 more on the way. China has announced a pause in nuclear commissioning, and a review. But its leaders know that they must move away from coal: the damage to health from a year of Chinese coal-burning dwarfs any caused by the nuclear industry. And if anyone can build cheap, one-size-fits-all nuclear plants, it is probably the Chinese.

If the West turns its back on nuclear power and China ploughs on, the results could be unfortunate. Nuclear plants need trustworthy and transparent regulation, a clear distinction between operators and regulators and well enforced building codes. The Fukushima plant lacked some of those. China can offer none.

Europe's far right

Pause and engage

The best way to stop the populist far right is to counter not pander to its crude message

The Economist Mar 17th 2011 | from the print edition



FROM the tip of Scandinavia to the shores of the Mediterranean, far-right leaders and parties are doing well in opinion polls. Given Europe's history, this has set nerves jangling.

The biggest shock is the rise of Marine Le Pen, leader of France's National Front. Polls put her ahead of both President Nicolas Sarkozy and any likely Socialist challenger in 2012. She will not win the presidency, but she has shed the jackbooted imagery of her father, Jean-Marie, who shamed France by getting into the run-off against Jacques Chirac in 2002.

The right is on the rise for old reasons and new. Hostility to immigration is sharpened by Islamist terrorism; alienation from the political system is exacerbated by both globalisation and the bail-outs of failing euro-zone countries. Ms Le Pen and her kind trade on anti-Islamist sentiment to resist not just more immigration from north Africa but also Islamification at home. In northern Europe far-right parties play more on hostility to Brussels and the euro. The German government is worried about the possible emergence of a nationalist party pushing to restore the D-mark.

Europe's political establishment has tried many different tactics to defang the far right, none of which has wholly succeeded. The first was to ignore it in the hope that it might go away. Next came a policy of ostracising extremists, throwing a *cordon sanitaire* around parties that won municipal or parliamentary seats. Then came its opposite: embracing the far right and even bringing it into government, in the hope that contact with reality would both moderate it and reduce its appeal.

Mr Sarkozy tried another approach in the run-up to the 2007 election: he occupied the National Front's ground by ranting about immigrants and using coded anti-Islam discourse. A charitable interpretation is that by broadening the respectable right, he left less space for the extremists. Whatever the intent, this strategy had some success in winning back voters. But it is a dangerous path to follow. By espousing the arguments of the far right, the centre may legitimise them; and voters may opt not for the ersatz party but the real thing, especially in a more respectable guise—Ms Le Pen, for instance.

Take them on instead

Mainstream parties would do better to address the extremists head on. Instead of stoking anti-Muslim sentiment by claiming, as Germany's interior minister has, that Islam has no place in a country, explain the importance of

integrating minorities. Instead of demonising the Greeks, spell out the arguments for keeping the euro together. Instead of hinting that governments can hold globalisation at bay, explain its benefits and the costs of resisting it. That may sound Panglossian, but it is better than raising voters' expectations only to dash them later. That's what Mr Sarkozy did in 2008 when he pledged to keep a steel plant from shifting production abroad. The jobs went anyway. Little wonder if voters flock to parties that seem to offer a more robust bulwark against painful change.

Dealing with extremists is never easy for moderates, but addressing voters' concerns honestly, and making the argument against the far right stoutly, is the best approach. Those who steal extremists' clothes end up looking too much like them.

Intervention in the Arab awakening

No illusions

The Arab awakening is succumbing to violence. The outside world has a duty to act

The Economist Mar 17th 2011 | from the print edition



UNTIL the Arab awakening reached Libya, protesters seemed able to prevail armed with little more than self-belief. Not any more. In Bahrain the regime's troops, reinforced by foreigners—mostly Saudis—have stormed the protesters' tent-city at Pearl roundabout, shooting as they went. In Yemen the regime of President Ali Abdullah Saleh has taken to firing live rounds into the crowds. And in Libya itself, as Muammar Qaddafi seizes back the rebel towns strung along the Mediterranean coast, the people are reaping the whirlwind. Torture and death are rampaging through Brega and Zawiya. Terror and despair loom over Tobruk and Benghazi.

As the violence escalates, the outside world no longer has the easy option of simply backing the “reform” of corrupt and oppressive regimes. Instead, it faces hard choices. Are countries content to sit on their hands and watch rebels die? And if they feel they must step in, what exactly can they do?

In Libya, at least, those questions are fast becoming the business of historians rather than policymakers. The moment will soon have passed when a no-fly zone designed to stop Colonel Qaddafi from using his air force could offer civilians much protection. As *The Economist* went to press, the UN Security Council was at last discussing this but Colonel Qaddafi was advancing towards Benghazi (see [article](#)). If he arrives at the city, its people will need more than just air cover to save them in what could be a bloody and long-drawn-out battle.

Democracies wisely set obstacles in the way of those who seek to put the world to rights by fighting—however good their motives. Bitter experience in Iraq has taught how liberators soon come to be seen as oppressors. Western troops have found that when they wage war, they own the mess they have created. You cannot fight people into behaving well.

At the same time, democracies shrink from the idea that might is right. After the genocide in Rwanda, nations took on a duty to stop mass-killing if they could. Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Liberia all showed that outsiders can in fact help avert catastrophes. The Arab awakening is all about human dignity and the rights of ordinary people—values that the West lives by and seeks to promote. For the West to turn its back on Libya's rebels and to stand aside while its allies shoot protesters in Bahrain betrays its own values.

Confronted by the contradictory urges to do good and steer clear, the West has so far accomplished neither. Even as the Arab League and the Gulf Co-operation Council have called for international action against

Colonel Qaddafi, the West has temporised and rebel towns have fallen. Europe is at its chaotic worst. France and Britain want a no-fly zone, but Germany, deaf to the pleas of Libyans, sees only risks and entanglement. And in America Barack Obama has summoned up the will to condemn violence and oppression, but, until far too late, studiously avoided summoning up the means to do much about it—a weak stance for a superpower (see [Lexington](#)).

Those who wish America to be a force for good will find that disappointing. But those who rejected George Bush's searing and bloody pursuit of democracy should reflect on how they got what they sought.

All talk

No universal formula can cut through the contradiction between values and interests in foreign policy—that is why intervention in Vietnam and Somalia led to neglect in Rwanda, which set the scene for intervention once more in Bosnia and Iraq. And it is why foreign policy is condemned to live with an age-old dilemma. If the West sacrifices its place in the world to its values, then it will be less able to promote them. On the other hand, if the West always puts narrow realpolitik before its values, then its values will be tainted in the eyes of the world.

By that test, the West let down the Bahrainis: sterner talk from Mr Obama may have deterred their attackers. Yet the West does still have options in Libya. To send in Western ground forces would be to own a dysfunctional, violent place. But the West can seize upon Arab backing to help protect eastern Libya. It should jam Colonel Qaddafi's communications and rush in a no-fly zone. If the regime begins to pound Benghazi, then aircraft—including Arab aircraft—should destroy Colonel Qaddafi's tanks, artillery and gunboats.

Have no illusions about the risks of such a policy. Bombing Libyan armour would endanger the lives of pilots and, inevitably, civilians. It would, at least temporarily, partition Libya. The eastern groups under the protection of the outside world may include Islamists and killers who turn out to be just as savage as Colonel Qaddafi. And that is if the policy succeeds.

Even so, these are risks that the West should now take before it is too late. Saving lives in eastern Libya will be hard. Not even trying to save them would be worse.

Japan's hydra-headed disaster

The fallout

Some natural disasters change history. Japan's tsunami could be one

The Economist Mar 17th 2011 | from the print edition



THAT “tsunami” is one of the few Japanese words in global use points to the country’s familiarity with natural disaster. But even measured against Japan’s painful history, its plight today is miserable. The magnitude-9 earthquake—the largest ever in the country’s history, equivalent in power to 30,000 Hiroshimas—was followed by a wave which wiped out whole towns. With news dribbling out from stricken coastal communities, the scale of the horror is still sinking in. The surge of icy water shoved the debris of destroyed towns miles inland, killing most of those too old or too slow to scramble to higher ground (see [article](#)). The official death toll of 5,429 will certainly rise. In several towns over half the population has drowned or is missing.

In the face of calamity, a decent people has proved extremely resilient: no looting; very little complaining among the tsunami survivors. In Tokyo people queued patiently to meet their tax deadlines. Everywhere there was a calm determination to conjure a little order out of chaos. Volunteers have rushed to help. The country’s Self-Defence Forces, which dithered in response to the Kobe earthquake in 1995, have poured into the stricken area. Naoto Kan, the prime minister, who started the crisis with very low public support, has so far managed to keep a semblance of order in the country, despite a series of calamities that would challenge even the strongest of leaders. The government’s inept handling of the Kobe disaster did much to undermine Japan’s confidence in itself.

The wider concern

The immediate tragedy may be Japan’s; but it also throws up longer-term questions that will eventually affect people all the way round the globe. Stockmarkets stumbled on fears about the impact on the world’s third-biggest economy. Japan’s central bank seems to have stilled talk of financial panic with huge injections of liquidity. Early estimates of the total damage are somewhat higher than the \$100 billion that Kobe cost, but not enough to wreck a rich country. Disruption to electricity supplies will damage growth, and some Asian supply chains are already facing problems; but new infrastructure spending will offset some of the earthquake’s drag on growth.

Those calculations could change dramatically if the nuclear crisis worsens. As *The Economist* went to press, helicopters were dropping water to douse overheating nuclear fuel stored at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant, where there have been explosions, fires and releases of radiation greater, it seems, than the Japanese authorities had admitted. The country’s nuclear industry has a long history of cover-ups and incompetence, and— notwithstanding the heroism of individual workers—the handling of the crisis by TEPCO, the nuclear plant’s operator, is sadly in line with its past performance.

Even if the nuclear accident is brought under control swiftly, and the release of radiation turns out not to be large enough to damage public health, this accident will have a huge impact on the nuclear industry, both inside and outside Japan. Germany has already put on hold its politically tricky decision to extend the life of its nuclear plants. America's faltering steps towards new reactors look sure to be set back, not least because new concerns will mean greater costs.

China has announced a pause in its ambitious plans for nuclear growth. With 27 reactors under construction, more than twice as many as any other country, China accounts for almost half the world's current nuclear build-out—and it has plans for 50 more reactors. And in the long term the regime looks unlikely to be much deterred from these plans—and certainly not by its public's opinion, whatever that might be. China has a huge thirst for energy that it will slake from as many wells as it can, with planned big increases in wind power and in gas as well as the nuclear build-out and ever more coal-fired plants.

Thus the great nuclear dilemma. For the best nuclear safety you need not just good planning and good engineering. You need the sort of society that can produce accountability and transparency, one that can build institutions that receive and deserve trust. No nuclear nation has done this as well as one might wish, and Japan's failings may well become more evident. But democracies are better at building such institutions. At the same time, however, democracy makes it much easier for a substantial and implacable minority to make sure things don't happen, and that seems likely to be the case with plans for more nuclear power. Thus nuclear power looks much more likely to spread in societies that are unlikely to ground it in the enduring culture of safety that it needs. China's nearest competitor in the new-build stakes is Russia.

Yet democracies would be wrong to turn their back on nuclear power. It still has the advantages of offering reliable power, a degree of energy security, and no carbon dioxide emissions beyond those incurred in building and supplying the plants. In terms of lives lost it has also boasted, to date, a reasonably good record. Chernobyl's death toll is highly uncertain, but may have reached a few thousand people. China's coal mines certainly kill 2,000-3,000 workers a year, and coal-smogged air there and elsewhere kills many more. It remains a reasonable idea for most rich countries to keep some nuclear power in their portfolio, not least because by maintaining economic and technological stakes in nuclear they will have more standing to insist on high standards for safety and non-proliferation being applied throughout the world. But in the face of panic, of sinister towers of smoke, of invisible and implacable threats, the reasonable course is not an easy one.

Back to Tokyo

No country faces that choice more painfully than Japan, scarred by nuclear energy but also deprived of native alternatives. To abandon nuclear power is to commit the country to massive imports of gas and perhaps coal. To keep it is to face and overcome a national trauma and to accept a small but real risk of another disaster.

Japan's all too frequent experience of calamity suggests that such events are often followed by great change. After the earthquake of 1923, it turned to militarism. After its defeat in the second world war, and the dropping of the atom bombs, it espoused peaceful growth. The Kobe earthquake reinforced Japan's recent turning in on itself.

This new catastrophe seems likely to have a similarly huge impact on the nation's psyche. It may be that the Japanese people's impressive response to disaster, and the rest of the world's awe in the face of their stoicism, restores the self-confidence the country so badly needs. It may be that the failings of its secretive system of governance, exemplified by the shoddy management of its nuclear plants, lead to more demands for political reform. As long as Mr Kan can convince the public that the government's information on radiation is trustworthy, and that it can ease the cold and hunger of tsunami survivors, his hand may be strengthened to further liberalise Japan. Or it may be that things take a darker turn.

The stakes are high. Japan—a despondent country with a dysfunctional political system—badly needs change. It seems just possible that, looking back from a safe distance, Japan's people will regard this dreadful moment not just as a time of death, grief and mourning, but also as a time of rebirth.