

Re: Question about Libya

From marko.papic@stratfor.com

To camilo.villarino@maec.es

MessageId:

Others <878204075.1410473.1300779574567.JavaMail.root@core.stratfor.com>
InReplyTo:

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Text

Dear Camilo,

Thank you very much for your thorough and well thought out analysis. You bring up a very good point about Spain illustrating with its participation a capability to act despite its economic situation. This to an extent has also informed the Greek response, with Souda Bay in Crete now becoming a key base of operations.

I have gone over my numbers and while Repsol does have interests in Libya, they are not all that considerable. Certainly Libya is not nearly as important to Madrid as it is to Rome and ENI.

Overall, I feel that Europe has rushed into the crisis, mainly because Paris and London are overcompensating for their complicity with Arab regimes and their lack of reaction to the initial wave of protest and pro-democracy demonstrations in the Arab world. The case of Michelle Alliot-Marie is particularly jarring. But at the same time, I find the dynamic within the EU really interesting. France seems to me to be trying to illustrate to everyone, but perhaps Germany most of all, that it is still a leader in Europe, particularly in military and foreign affairs.

To what extent is this crisis and its handling going to create a rift in Europe? I don't know... I just know that we have been following closely

Berlin's close relationship with Russia for some time now and that in the end Berlin's approach to this crisis approximates that of Moscow.

Something to watch for sure.

Cheers,

Marko

From: "Villarino Marzo, Camilo"

To: "Marko Papić"

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2011 8:48:27 AM

Subject: RE: Question about Libya

Dear Marko,

Yes, 2011 is proving hectic. Your work (analysts) and ours (diplomats) is becoming more and more difficult and at the same time more necessary than ever. Knowledge of History, Geopolitics, Economy and human nature in general is an urgent need.

In relation to Libya, I will try to answer first your question about the Spanish position. I think you are right and we have not been as vocal as others, although the Government (the PM and both the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defense had already spoken clearly days ago in favour of an international military action, provided it was supported by the UN and the Arab League, in order to stop a**human rights violationsa**). To better understand Madrida**s position you have to differentiate between Governmenta**s interests in foreign policy and its interest in domestic policy.

As far as foreign policy is concerned, Spain wants to show solidarity with the US and the other main European powers (with the exception of Germany, very much influenced by its domestic situation and Westerwelle) as well as to prove that in spite of its dire economic circumstances Spain can still be a player in the international arena. In what concerns Spanish domestic policy, the Government is in a difficult position: there will be very important local and regional elections on May 22. The polls predict heavy losses for the Socialist Party currently in power at the national level. Part of the socialist electorate is going to abstention and part of it is ready to vote to United Left (a coalition of the former Communist Party and other leftist parties). Wars (any war a*|) are not very popular among the left part of the Socialist Party, where there is still an important

degree of anti-Americanism, support for Castro's and Chavez's policies, etc. That explain in part the perception you and others have that Spain is supporting the military operation against Gadhafi (we have sent 6 planes and we are deploying one frigate with the Aegis system and one submarine) but at the same time does not appear to be fully behind it. And certainly not bragging about it. Besides that, the current Spanish Prime Minister has, for personal biographic reasons, a natural aversion against the use of force (his grand father, who was a military officer who opposed Franco, was executed without trial during the Spanish Civil War and he has lived with that memory at home since he was a child; I know that from a direct source) and he wants to differentiate himself from Primer Minister Aznar and his support for the 2003 War on Iraq.

Those are, of course, personal thoughts but I think they are quite close to the truth about the current Spanish position. It is true that we do have economic interests in Libya (REPSOL's and others) but it is not at all clear whether they are going to be served better with this intervention or not, to be honest. It will, depend very much on how the situation evolves, in Libya and in the rest of the Arab region. The latest declarations and counter-declarations from the Arab League show well how complex the situation is and how many interests (economic, political and geostrategic) inter-cross.

In what concerns the military intervention, I am afraid we have reacted late, when the use of military force was the only available tool for us and that is always a mistake. We should have intervened before, not just with sanctions but with a direct political dialogue at the highest possible level with Gadhafi's regime: transformation better than revolution better than war. I think we did not explore enough that way and now we have open the Pandora box of an intervention (very much supported by Sarkozy, for his own interests) which may draw us to unknown places. War is too serious a business to play with it to serve electoral purposes, although I am afraid I should already have got used to this.

Best wishes and good luck with your analysis, which I would certainly read with great interest as always.

Camilo

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De: Marko Papic [mailto:marko.papic@stratfor.com]

Enviado el: lunes, 21 de marzo de 2011 1:11

Para: Villarino Marzo, Camilo

Asunto: Question about Libya

Dear Camilo,

I hope my email finds you well. It has been a very intense three and a half months in this 2011. I am sure that you are in very much the same boat as me. First the Arab Spring, then the tragedy in Japan and now the simultaneous crises in Bahrain, Yemen and Libya. Not to mention that as the Europe Analyst, I also have to continue to monitor the Eurozone crisis.

I wanted to see what your thoughts were on the Libyan situation, particularly the Spanish side of the story. I feel that Madrid has been relatively quiet in the run up to the intervention. This is somewhat strange to me considering that Spain probably has the second greatest interests in Libya after Italy. Repsol has a lot of energy assets and a considerable production in-country.

Now from what I understand the Spanish air force has already moved some of its assets to Sigonella and has also offered two air bases to the coalition. However, I get a sense that Madrid has not been nearly as vocal as the other European countries involved.

Could you elucidate to me the thinking in Spain right now? I would like to write a series analyzing the main European players in this situation and Spain is certainly one of them, but it is difficult to gauge what Madrid is really thinking.

As always, this conversation is completely confidential and is completely off record. I could also give you a call at a time that is convenient to

you tomorrow (Monday).

I greatly appreciate any time you may have to offer.

Sincerely,

Marko

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